John Drinkwater: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him

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John Drinkwater (1882-1937) remains known primarily for his historical dramas. However, during his lifetime, after contributing to Edward Marsh's volumes of GEORGIAN POETRY (1912-1922) and especially after winning acclaim as a playwright, his verse attracted a wide audience. Of great importance in the development of Drinkwater's career as a dramatist was his friendship with Barry Jackson, whom he met in 1904, and his experience as an actor and playwright for Jackson's Pilgrim Players, the group that evolved into the influential Birmingham Repertory Theatre. His association with Jackson and his early stage experience are best detailed in the second volume of his autobiography, Discovery (1932). Although the verse plays he wrote for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre between 1914 and 1917 gained him some degree of deserved recognition, it was his Abraham Lincoln (1918) that alone won him international fame and guaranteed him a large and continued audience for all his work. So great was the effect of Abraham Lincoln's immense popular success that in 1922, as J. Middleton Murray has noted, the only poet in England more popular than Drinkwater was Masefield. After the Lincoln play, Drinkwater wrote three more historical dramas, experimenting with the same form and techniques developed in Abraham Lincoln; in none of them, however, did he achieve as great popular success or critical acclaim. Drinkwater's considerable literary output in the 1920's as a dramatist, poet, critic, biographer, and anthologist kept an interest in him alive, but in the 1930's critical study of his work decreased sharply, and since his death critics have paid him little attention. There still exists no full-length critical study of his work. JOHN DRINKWATER, THE MAN AND HIS WORK (n.d.), listed in Fred Millet's CONTEMPORARY BRITISH LITERATURE (1935), is either a ghost, as Houghton Mifflin writes that no record of the title can be found in their catalogs and files, or an insignificant advertising pamphlet.

Drinkwater's poetry, in general, suffers from a lack of distinctiveness, and most reviewers, even those who admired the sincerity and refined craftsmanship of his poems, have stressed Drinkwater's lack of imagination, his sentimentality, and the derivative nature of his verse. Some critics, such as Robert Graves and Laura Riding, have characterized the style and subject matter of his verse as typical of a deplorable artificiality and decadence found in the work of many poets of the time. Drinkwater's early poetic plays generally were well received; among these, X=O, A Night of the Trojan War (1917) is usually considered the most successful. The best discussion of the verse plays can be found in Priscilla Thouless' MODERN POETIC DRAMA (1934) and H. H. Anniah Gowda's THE REVIVAL OF ENGLISH POETIC DRAMA (1972). Most of the criticism of Drinkwater's work has focussed on his innovative historical dramas. All four historical plays have been widely criticized for various technical and conceptual flaws; however, particularly with Abraham Lincoln, critics have been...
Some have seen *Abraham Lincoln* as an enduring, moving tragedy and as an important contribution to dramatic form while others have seen it as a sentimental melodrama, remarkable only in its great appeal to the public's patriotic sentiment after World War I. Much attention has centered on the theory behind the structure of Drinkwater's historical or chronicle plays. Most critics now would agree with Robert Spiller's assessment that Drinkwater's innovations have not contributed greatly to modern dramatic technique. Although Drinkwater's continued influence on dramatic form has been slight, a number of critics have stressed his instrumental role in reviving public interest in serious theater after the war. Additionally, his feel for the elements of successful stage production, perhaps resulting from his long practical stage experience, seems to have been great; even reviewers who have questioned the value of a particular play as a piece of dramatic literature often have praised the production of the play for its acting and overall impact. Particularly important for their treatment of the historical plays are Arthur Ropes' "History and Drinkwater," Alois Wilhelm Roeder's *JOHN DRINKWATER ALS DRAMATIKER* (1927), John Cunliffe's *MODERN ENGLISH PLAYWRIGHTS: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA FROM 1825* (1927), and Helmut Papajewski's "John Drinkwater: Abraham Lincoln, Intention und Aufnahme." Although less well known for his critical studies, biographies, and anthologies than for his plays or verse, Drinkwater received a fair amount of praise for several of his efforts in these areas. A common failure in his critical studies and biographies is his reluctance to deal objectively with his subjects' weaknesses and faults. However, most critics have agreed with Richard Le Gallienne's view that in *Victorian Poetry* (1923) Drinkwater's critical judgement is balanced and that his analysis of the development and influence of Victorian poetic style, particularly Tennyson's, is perceptive and convincing.

The following bibliography contains all critical studies and reviews about Drinkwater and his work that I have been able to locate. Excluded from the bibliography are portraits of Drinkwater and photographs of production scenes, reproductions of portions of a play without critical comment, and mere listings of a title by Drinkwater or his name in a list. The bracketed number at the end of each abstract designates the degree of significance of the item from poor [1] to very good [5].
Aas, L. "Norg og Syd: Tre Engelske Dramatikere" (North and South: Three English Dramatists), TILSKUEREN (Copenhagen), XLVI (May 1929), 355-63. JD's name will always be tied to The Birmingham Repertory Theatre, where his fine early poetic plays were performed; however, they received little acclaim, and no one would have expected him to be world-famous only a few years later. The war years in England were an empty, sterile time for drama. JD's Abraham Lincoln came at the right psychological moment, and it gave the public a new taste for and interest in historical drama. JD is an author who, instead of theatrical commercialism, has chosen to give his audiences an historical, idealistic drama which deserves to be recognized in Nordic lands. [In Danish.] [3]

"Abe Lincoln in Japanese," TIME, XLVII (25 Feb 1946), 50. Although JD's Abraham Lincoln in itself is a "stilted, undramatic play," the performance in Tokyo has been well received by the Japanese. [2]


"Abraham Lincoln," LIVING AGE, CCC (8 March 1919), 623-26. In Abraham Lincoln, JD is most successful when portraying Lincoln as a high-minded statesman. Secondary characters, and especially Lincoln's humor, should have been further developed to give the play more life; however, this and the unremarkable choruses between the scenes detract little from JD's noble and forceful drama. [2]

"Abraham Lincoln," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXII (1 Feb 1919), 137-38. JD's Abraham Lincoln conveys a simple power, particularly in its presentation of Lincoln the statesman. At times the chorus lacks inspiration, and occasionally secondary characters appear too much as mere types. A more dramatic scene with Booth at the conclusion would have helped the play. JD is to be commended for attempting the dramatization of a serious heroic figure. [3]

"Abraham Lincoln," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 31 Oct 1918, p. 523. JD's Abraham Lincoln read as a book is only a mediocre play; its success as a drama, however, will be proven on the stage where the great simplicity of the play might generate power. [3]


"Abraham Lincoln at the Lyric Opera House," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLIV (1 March 1919), 304. JD brings intelligence and seriousness to the theater. But while his portrait of Lincoln in Abraham Lincoln is adequate and interesting, the play has little "life . . ., variety . . ., and fun." [Also brief comments on the production at the Lyric Opera House.] [1]

"Abraham Lincoln at the Westminster," NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, XIX (20 April 1940), 529. JD's Abraham Lincoln is a well structured, forceful play. The opening night production at the Mask Theatre, however, was quite weak. [1]

Adcock, A. St. John. *Gods of Modern Grub Street: Impressions of Contemporary Authors* (NY: Fredrick A. Stokes, 1923), pp. 93-99. JD's verse from the beginning has been marked by self-conscious rhetoric; his "genius is more didactic, descriptive, narrative than lyrical." Undoubtedly, his greatest achievement is *Abraham Lincoln*. In it, by modifying the form of the chronicle play, JD created a structure perfectly suited to convey the greatness of Lincoln's character. Unfortunately, his later chronicle play, *Oliver Cromwell*, though a notable piece of dramatic characterization, does not capture its hero's character as well as *Abraham Lincoln*. [3]

Agate, James. "The Hound of Drinkwater," *Saturday Review* (Lond), CXXXII (5 Nov 1921), 527; rptd in *Alarms and Excursions* (NY: George H. Doran, 1922; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1967), pp. 199-204. It is impossible to ignore the sentimental, melodramatic quality of JD's *Abraham Lincoln*. However, because of its force of characterization the play has great emotional power. Even as a melodrama it is commendable, being "remoter, finer, of greater endurance" than such well done melodramas as Maeterlinck's *The Burgo-Master of Stilemonde*. William J. Rea's Lincoln at the Scala Theatre, though occasionally flawed, was generally excellent, capturing well the essence of Lincoln's spirit. [5]

The introduction to Martin Secker's new edition of St. John Hankin's plays sounds less like an introduction to Hankin than a justification of JD's dramatic theories. However, JD's plays often do not bear the fruit promised by his theories. JD, for example, claims that dramatic expression calls for poetic vision and is not assisted by the representation of mere photographic actuality. But as is evident in *Mary Stuart* and *Oliver Cromwell*, which "though sovereignly untrue, are exquisite works," JD's poetic vision is sometimes false. Robert E. Lee is JD's best play for three reasons: though somewhat didactic, it is at least "intelligibly and inspirational" so; it presents an accurate picture of Lee's character; except for one scene, the play is dramatically effective. JD's genius for stagecraft was evident in the production of the play. [Rptd from *Saturday Review* (Lond) or *Sunday Times* (Lond). Not seen.] [4]

A SHORT VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE, 1900-1926 (Lond, NY: Herbert Jenkins, 1926), pp. 30, 80-85. JD's historical dramas have been justly criticized for their didacticism and for their lack of imaginative reality, although the latter quality stands out only when the reader is directed towards it. It is a certainty that JD's *Abraham Lincoln* will always endure. [3]

"Two Stuart Plays," *Saturday Review* (Lond), CXXIV (7 Oct 1922), 502; rptd in *At Half-Past Eight, Essays of the Theatre*, 1921-1922 (Lond: J. Cape; NY: Bernard G. Richards, 1923; rptd Lond & NY: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 96-107. A good historical play should depict, above all, the mind of the playwright. JD's portrayal of Mary Queen of Scots in his *Mary Stuart* does not convince us of his general thesis. Moreover, using the story of Mary Stuart
to exemplify his thesis demeans her stature. The performance at the Everyman Theatre lacked distinction. [4]

Allen, Percy and Ernest. LORD OXFORD & "SHAKESPEARE": A REPLY TO JOHN DRINKWATER (Lond: Denis Archer, 1933). JD's "insufficient knowledge of Elizabethan methods, psychology, and writings," as well as his limited knowledge of the facts supporting the Oxfordian case, make his attack against "the now almost complete, and still mounting, case for Lord Oxford as the genuine 'Shakespeare'" weak and unconvincing. [A point by point refutation of the argument against Lord Oxford as Shakespeare in JD's Shakespeare.]] [5]

"Allotments on Parnassus," NATION AND ATHENÆUM, XXX (17 Jan 1922), 626, 628. Characterized by a seriousness and a lack of imagination unsuited to lyric poetry, JD's Seeds of Time is inferior to his earlier volumes of poetry. [3]


Anderson, Margaret Haskett. "The Great Lover's Mind," PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, IC (16 April 1921), 1234. In JD's Mary Stuart, Queen Mary's modern counterpart does not deserve the high regard that Mary Stuart commands. [l]

Anderson, Sherwood. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

Archer, William. "Dramatic Performances in London," REVIEW (NY), I (14 June 1919), 109-10. Despite poorly handled local color, JD's Abraham Lincoln is an admirable portrait of Lincoln's character and his historical significance. The play, however, would have been greatly improved had JD eliminated the chorus, placed the second to last scene at Gettysburg, revised the assassination scene, and found a suitable leading actor. [3]

"Dreary Drama in London," NATION (NY), CVIII (26 April 1919), 669. Although flawed by historical inaccuracies, the choruses, and the poor depiction of Frederick Douglas, the presentation of JD's Abraham Lincoln in Hammersmith was well done, with admirable simplicity. [2]

Armstrong, Martin. "John Drinkwater as Poet," BOOKMAN (Lond), LXVI (June 1924), 151-52. The chief faults in The Collected Poems of John Drinkwater are an "almost complete lack of stress and urgency either of emotion, thought or expression," a too great susceptibility to the influence of other poets, and a frequent inaccuracy and triteness of expression. The poems from Seeds of Time (1921) are the best part of the present collection. [4]

"Apologies for a Pair of Kings," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 19 Dec 1926, p. 5. JD's interpretation of history in Mr. Charles, King of England, despite a number of overstatements as well as understatements, is fascinating and indicates JD's ability to render historical fact meaningfully. [2]

Arns, Karl. "John Drinkwater als Dramatiker" (John Drinkwater as Dramatist), DIE NEUEREN SPRACHEN, XXXIV (1926), 32-41. Although most English critics have tended to praise JD's plays for their dramatic form, the mood and feeling of his dramas are their most striking quality. Hermann von
Boettichers, for example, with greater economy of style, is more successful than JD in transforming history into drama. Given JD's marked poetic abilities, Abraham Lincoln would have been a better play had JD freed himself from the history of Lincoln's life and formed an epic out of the episodes of the play. JD could then have enlivened the play by drawing more action into the plot in a concise manner; additionally, he could have eliminated the need for a chorus and the illusion of reality would have been strengthened. Robert E. Lee shows a growth in JD's dramatic abilities; his battle scene, for instance, is powerful without being encumbered by unneeded stage equipment. In Oliver Cromwell, although the scenes display true poetic beauty, JD does not succeed in constructing a cohesive drama. The scenes do capture the mood of the times, but JD's portrayal of Cromwell as a force free from guilt and human weakness falls short of adequate historical representation. [In German] [4]........  "Literatur" (Literature), ENGLISCHE STUDIEN, LXXIV (1940-1941), 105-6. Even when dealing with rudimentary topics, JD's style in English Poetry; An Unfinished History is urbane. The last two chapters in the volume are the best. [In German.] [1] Auslander, Joseph. "Poets Who Are Poets," WORLD (NY), 21 June 1925, p. 4m. In New Poems JD exhibits the qualities of subdued emotion, clear thought, and controlled expression evident in his earlier work. [2] B., E. "Camp and Cabinet," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXV (30 June 1923), 863-64. JD's Robert E. Lee fails to become a tragedy; it unfortunately remains a "chronicle-morality." Moreover, it is neither a good chronicle nor a good morality. Except for Jefferson Davis, all characters in the play, especially Lee, are didactic and tiring two-dimensional figures. Despite the play, the acting in the production at the Regent Theatre was quite good. [4] B., F. G. "John Drinkwater Reaches the Stage," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 14 May 1933, p. 7e. Written skillfully and simply and avoiding completely the fault of "self-praise," JD's Discovery is an entertaining autobiography. [1] B., L. "Shorter Notices," FREEMAN, V (29 March 1922), 70. In Cotswold Characters, JD presents sincere, graceful sketches of the old inhabitants of Cotswold. [1] B., L. "Shorter Notices," FREEMAN, VI (20 Sept 1922), 45-46. JD's Lincoln: the World Emancipator is marred by polemical rhetoric and lack of imagination. Only the poetic conclusion to the volume is convincing. [2] B., O. S. "John Drinkwater Views This Troubled World," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 1 July 1933, pp. 1, 3. JD's This Troubled World shows insight and sympathy. [1] B., R. "The Merry Monarch," NEW STATESMAN, XXVIII (18 Dec 1926), 314-15. JD seems to have the ability to write historical narrative; however, his Mr. Charles, King of England is flawed by a lack of historical judgement. Although JD's reconstruction of the Restoration, especially his picture of General Monk, is admirably done, he proves himself unknowledgeable about the realities of Charles' constitutional
policy and about seventeenth-century politics generally. Unfortunately, the book is marred by a "consistently tiresome and sloppy" style. [5]

B., W. S. "Drinkwater the Lyric Poet," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 22 March 1922, p. 5. JD's Seeds of Time shows him to be a mark above the English poets whose only claim to distinction is poetry exhibiting a traditional form and atmosphere. The sonnets in JD's volume are especially notable for their fine expression of emotions of love. [3]

B., W. S. "John Drinkwater the Wordsworthian," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 8 Nov 1919, p. 9. JD's achievements owe more to his poetic sensibility than to anything else. His preoccupation with the "large simplicities in human character" marks him as a follower of Wordsworth and puts him in opposition to realists of the present generation. [Review of Poems, 1908-1919.] [4]

B., W. S. "The Poems of John Drinkwater," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 13 April 1918, p. 9. JD is most important as a critic. His poetry, the vehicle through which he expresses his thoughts, is thoroughly traditional. While his verse has a great deal of charm, it has very little originality. However, he seems to have no ambitions to become a new and major poetic voice. [Review of Poems, 1908-1914.] [4]

Barfield, Owen. "John Drinkwater," NEW STATESMAN, XIX (15 July 1922), 415-16. It is difficult to decide whether the popular success of Abraham Lincoln stems from moving tragedy or sentimental melodrama. The poetry in Selected Poems of John Drinkwater compels us to believe the latter. The weakness of the poetry lies not so much in overly refined phrasing as in an imagination either too weak or too undisciplined "to attempt loftiness without growing vague." JD strives for simplicity, but in trying to be philosophical as well he exhibits two weaknesses. Because he is "always too conscious of his own life," his poems either do not support the weight of his ideas without becoming vague, or they "descend to sentimentality and triviality." Only occasionally, as in Pawns: Four Poetic Plays, does JD's imagination become "concentrated" as well as "large and dramatic" enough to yield excellent poetry. [5]

Bates, Katherine Lee. "Needed: A Salvation Army for Conversion of 'Blurb' Writers!" NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 18 July 1925, p. 2. The first poem and the last in JD's New Poems have some merit; the other poems in this volume that are not translations of German lyrics are mere "poetic trifles." [2]

Beard, Sarah Allen. "1937 Harvest for Young Adults," LIBRARY JOURNAL, LXII (1 Nov 1937), 818. JD's Robinson of England will be enjoyable to young people. [1]


Bellamy, Francis R. "The Theatre," OUTLOOK (NY), CLI (24 April 1929), 670. JD's Bird in Hand is extremely funny. [Includes a portrait of JD.] [1]

"Belles Lettres," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), II (5 Sept 1925), 109. In The Muse in Council, JD's criticism, though sound,
lacks the depth of insight demanded of a literary critic. [1] "Belles Lettres," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), IX (6 Aug 1932), 32. [Describes the contents of The Eighteen-sixties; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, ed by JD.] [1] Benchley, Robert C. "Drama," LIFE (NY), LXXXII (13 Dec 1923), 18. The literary merit of JD's Robert E. Lee has nothing to do with excitement felt by audiences. Berton Churchill's Lee was a great disappointment. [1] Benét, William Rose. "Children's Bookshop," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), V (24 Nov 1928), 415. JD's All About Me is inferior to the books for children by Milne. [1] Benét, William Rose. "Drama," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), LXXII (13 Dec 1923), 18. The literary merit of JD's Robert E. Lee has nothing to do with excitement felt by audiences. Berton Churchill's Lee was a great disappointment. [1] Benét, William Rose. "Fiction," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), XVI (11 Sept 1937), 20. Although lacking depth, JD's Robinson of England has a good deal of charm. [1] Benét, William Rose. "Round About Parnassus," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), VII (7 March 1931), 649. The verse of JD's American Vignettes, though interesting, lacks any sort of poetic depth. [1] Bennett, Arnold. "Introduction," Abraham Lincoln (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), pp. ix-xii. The great popular success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be attributed to his practical stage knowledge, the simplicity of the play both in conception and staging, and William J. Rea's well played Lincoln. [2] Bennett, Florence Mary. "A Contemporary Renaissance?" POET LORE, XXXVI (Spring 1925), 126-35. Both the conception and purpose of JD's Abraham Lincoln are poetic, not historical. This is borne out by JD's use of the device of the Greek chorus, although the Greek chorus is woven more intimately into the drama than is JD's. His introduction of a fictional character and use of commonly known history also make his greatest play more poetic. The great popular success of Abraham Lincoln is significant, for it portends a renewed interest in poetic drama. [5] Bergholz, Harry. "John Drinkwater als Dramatiker" (John Drinkwater as Dramatist), ENGLISCHE STUDIEN, LXIII (1928-1929), 389-400. From the beginning of his career, JD's strength lay in his ability to write artistically sound plays. Abraham Lincoln marks the true maturity of his abilities as a dramatic poet. The chorus is used well for the cohesiveness of the exposition, and despite JD's close adherence to Lord Charnwood's biography of Lincoln, the characters succeed beautifully. Abraham Lincoln shares one common failing with other historical dramas: the character of the hero, rather than the action, develops the exposition. The quality of Oliver Cromwell is unequal. Robert E. Lee is an excellent theater piece, better and more lively than Abraham Lincoln at the high points. German audiences who had seen Schiller's MARIA STUART, a strictly historical drama, were surprised and disappointed in JD's Mary Stuart, which uses Mary's career as a metaphor for modern love. While JD attempts to free the form of Mary Stuart from strict chronological movement, his success is minimal. The play is not only overly didactic, but it is unsuccessful in illuminating a modern problem with an historical metaphor. In Little Johnny, the historical background seems irrelevant to the play. Robert Burns is a dramatic
failure because the play is primarily a recitation of Burns' poetry. Bird in Hand is JD's best play. It is lively and fresh throughout, there are no superfluous lines, and the characters are dramatized very effectively. Bird in Hand is the best synthesis of JD's practical theater knowledge and his artistic skills. [Also includes a discussion of JD's friendship with Barry Jackson and the formation and early days of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.] [In German.] [5]

"Best Sellers on Parnassus," NATION AND ATHENAEUM (Lond), XXXVIII (24 Oct 1925), 152. JD's Abraham Lincoln and Oliver Cromwell do little towards depicting the tragic significance of their heroes. They primarily add "touches of homelife" to common history. [Review of The Collected Plays of John Drinkwater.] [2]

Bickley, Francis. "Mary Stuart," BOOKMAN (Lond), LX (May 1921), 99-100. In Mary Stuart, JD spells out the link between the historical scene and the modern scene which surrounds it. However, historically and in JD's play, the scenes seem unrelated. The dialogue and the prose in the play are well written. [2]

... . . . . . . . "New Books," BOOKMAN (Lond), XLIII (Oct 1912), 65. Much of the poetry in JD's Poems of Love and Earth seems false because the diction and phrasing are clichéd. Several poems, however, are very good; "The Fires of God" is the best. [3]

... . . . . . . . "Pawns," BOOKMAN (Lond), LIII (Nov 1917), 63. The plays in JD's Pawns: Three Poetic Plays are well structured and well written. The verse is aptly varied for rhetorical effect throughout and rhyme is used with care. Characterization usually achieves the desired intensity. [4]

... . . . . . . . "A Poet and His Art," BOOKMAN (Lond), LIII (Jan 1918), 136. Like his poetry, JD's criticism in Prose Papers is, on the whole, both sincere and perceptive. His essays on Gray, the Brontës, Fredrick Tennyson, and Rupert Brooke are especially insightful. However, his analysis of why authors choose the dramatic form and his claims about the renewed interest in and use for the chorus are disputable. [4]

"Biography," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), IX (1 April 1933), 516. [Describes the contents of JD's Discovery.] [1]

"Biography," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 13 Aug 1931, p. 622. The quality of JD's The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle is seriously flawed by JD's romantically sentimental treatment of its hero. [1]

"Bird in Hand," CATHOLIC WORLD, CXXIX (May 1929), 203-4. The production of JD's Bird in Hand at the Booth Theater shows JD's genius for staging and for natural, humorous dialogue. [1]

"Bird in Hand," THEATRE MAGAZINE, L (Aug 1929), 43. JD's Bird in Hand is an excellent and entertaining comedy remarkable for its portrayal and contrast of characterization. [1]

Birrell, Francis. "A Sentimental Journey," NEW STATESMAN, XIX (30 Sept 1922), 667. There is little evidence from JD's Mary Stuart to suggest that JD's reputation as an historical dramatist is deserved. His faulty historical conception of
Mary Stuart aside, JD's dramatic rendering of her character is seriously flawed. JD's heroine is "merely a flapper," in no way "an important member of the human race." As such, she is unsuitable as a romantic heroine. JD has simplified his drama to the point where it becomes "simply flat" and lacks any poetic power. The production at the Everyman Theatre, however, was excellent, Laura Cowie's Mary Stuart particularly. [4]

"The Bookman's Table," BOOKMAN (Lond), LV (Dec 1918), 118. In Abraham Lincoln, JD is not interested in the psychology of Lincoln, but in his actions to save the nation and in his character as perceived by sympathetic Americans. The simplicity and directness of the prose is admirable. [2]

"Books in Brief," NATION (NY), CIX (8 Nov 1919), 616. Despite claims that JD's Abraham Lincoln reveals the essential Lincoln with great simplicity, JD's play actually gives little more than the traditional portrait of Lincoln as a "plaster saint." [2]

"Books in Brief," NATION (NY), CXIV (28 June 1922), 779. JD's Seeds of Time, though charming, lacks thought and substance. [1]

"Books in Brief," NATION (NY), CXXXI (9 July 1930), 49. The selections and notes in the English section of Twentieth-century Poetry, edited by JD, are disappointing. [1]

"Books in Brief Review," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXV (10 May 1924), 186. JD's An Anthology of English Verse is a "wonderful collection of flowers" of English poetry. [1]

Bowen, C. M. "Two Cromwells," FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, no CXV (1 March 1929), 402-9. In Oliver Cromwell, JD maintains a strict fidelity to historical truth. His play is important primarily for its characterization of Cromwell, however, not for its presentation of history. To this end, the dignity of the dialogue is commendable, representing Cromwell as an ideal of political freedom. Unfortunately, JD's ideal picture of Cromwell and the relatively bland secondary characters make for a play notably lacking in dramatic conflict. Even within Cromwell there is no conflict. The "simplicity and single-mindedness" of all the characters works against the play generally as well as against a moving portrait of the hero. [5]

Bowers, Claude G. "Fox, Statesman and Gambler, Portrayed in Drinkwater's Life," WORLD (NY), 7 Oct 1928, p. 10m. Although JD's prose does not compare to his poetry, in Charles James Fox JD not only gives many new facts about and insights into Fox's character but conveys the charm of the man as well. The book cannot be called a true biography, but it is an admirable portrait. [2]
Bradford, Gamaliel. "Drinkwater's Lee," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 8 Sept 1923, p. 21. Although Lee's reticence makes him unlikely material for drama, JD's characterization of him in Robert E. Lee is remarkably successful. The "grandeur" of Lee is conveyed well. Several of Lee's statements, however, do not ring true. [2]

Braybrooke, Patrick. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

"Brief Life," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 1 Oct 1937, p. 16. Except for an excellent chapter on Shakespeare's stage, JD's Shakespeare provides little new or useful information. JD spends too much time unnecessarily refuting the Baconian and Oxonian heresies regarding Shakespeare's authorship. [2]

"Briefer Mention," COMMONWEAL, XXVI (15 Oct 1937), 585. JD's Robinson of England is acceptable for those whose taste is English. [1]

"Briefer Mention," DIAL, LXXV (Aug 1923), 202. The poetry in JD's Preludes, 1921-1922 is "noticeably uneven in quality:" prosaic lines detract from his poetic achievement. [1]

"Briefer Mention," DIAL, LXXV (Dec 1923), 612. Although unsuccessful with southern dialect, as with Abraham Lincoln, JD, in Robert E. Lee, successfully recreates the spirit of the Civil War as well as the heroic qualities of its leaders. JD does not crudely take advantage of the "hero worship" paid to his heroes commonly; his characterizations, however, dramatize how this attitude came about. [3]

"Briefer Mention," DIAL, LXXIX (Aug 1925), 174. JD's New Poems will not increase his stature as a poet. His poetry in this volume is merely refined and graceful. The volume also includes some German lyrics, several of which have lost their vitality by JD's translation. [2]


Bronner, Milton. "John Drinkwater - An Appreciation," BOOKMAN (NY), XLI (June 1915), 446-52. The works of JD show him to be essentially a Puritan, "but a Puritan in love with life and especially with earth and the beauties of nature." Although he occasionally deals with themes of current interest, he has little concern for modern social problems, being content to pursue spiritual goals and to cultivate the values of a single life. Cromwell and Other Poems shows a remarkable growth in JD's artistic abilities. In this volume, the episodic but unified structure and the blending of narrative and lyric verse are handled well; Cromwell's career is accurately followed and vividly presented. JD's picture of King Charles' spirit, however, succeeds better than his depiction of Cromwell's. Like his poetry, JD's poetic dramas, Cophetua and Rebellion, display a Puritan tone; both are concerned with universal equality. Rebellion, which neglects neither action nor characterization, seems well suited for the stage. [5]

Brown, Heywood. "Lincoln and Some Others," COLLIER'S, LXV (7 Feb 1920), 13, 24, 54-55. JD's Abraham Lincoln lacks greatness because it intentionally simplifies its complex hero. However, despite the weak portrayal of Lincoln's
wit and political acumen, JD's play is successful because it is truly noble. [2]

Brown, Ivor. "French History," WEEK-END REVIEW (Lond), V (23 April 1932), 521. Although historically accurate, Napoleon - The Hundred Days by Benito Mussolini and Giovacchino, and adapted by JD, is a disappointment. Mussolini's political views in the play are not significant, and the play has little emotional appeal. The scene added by JD seems superfluous. The production by Robert Atkins at the New Theatre was handled well; it is the play itself that lacks dramatic interest. [3]

... "Johannes Factotum," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXL (28 April 1928), 520-21. JD's Bird in Hand is a witty, bright comedy. JD's production of his own play at the Royalty Theatre was flawed only by the use of conventional costumes of farce. [1]

... "The Muse at Malvern," NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, VIII (28 July 1934), 121-22. JD's A Man's House is a lively and well constructed play. The production at the Malvern Festival, however, was weak. [2]

... "The Play," WEEK-END REVIEW (Lond), VIII (8 July 1933), 36-37. Despite the slow pace and lack of dramatic substance in JD's Laying the Devil, the play is noteworthy. It not only has "that amplitude of diction beloved of the Edwardian Masters," a welcome relief from the "clipped realism" of recent dramatic dialogue, but it deals positively with the quality of chastity with surprising success. [3]

... "The Tragic Muse," WEEK-END REVIEW (Lond), V (20 Feb 1932), 229-30. JD's Abraham Lincoln, a "bare, lucid, faithful piece of work," is marred only by the chorus. Although Harcourt Williams' Lincoln lacks toughness, the production at the Old Vic was excellent. [1]

Bundy, Murray W. "John Drinkwater and 'the Cats,'" RESEARCH STUDIES (Washington State U), XXXIII (June 1965), 37-55. In The Pilgrim of Eternity; Byron - a Conflict, the unusually long first chapter, "Controversy," dealing with the possible incestuous relationship between Augusta and Byron, seems out of context, belonging more appropriately between chapters three and five. In fact, evidence shows that it originally was Chapter 4. A copy of ASTARTE, edited by Mary Countess of Lovelace (1921), with JD's annotations, suggests that when JD read the letters between Lady Byron, Mrs. Villiers, and Augusta in ASTARTE, he found a drama that affected him emotionally and outraged him morally. Byron emerged as the victim of the three women. In order to finish his book, JD had to disengage himself from the controversy; he therefore removed the chapter and placed it at the beginning of his book. A comparison of JD's annotations in ASTARTE with statements in his biography provides a rare opportunity to study how a biographer uses his sources. [5]

Burdett, Osbert. "Behind the Scenes of Pepys," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond) CI (1 Nov 1930), 563-64. In Pepys: His Life and Character, JD gives a sympathetic as well as a sharp, analytical picture of Pepys. The style of the work is marked by smooth blending of commentary and quotation. [1]
Burton, G. L. "John Drinkwater," CENTRAL LITERARY MAGAZINE (Birmingham, England), XXXV (Jan 1940), 11-14. JD will be remembered primarily as a lyric poet. Even in his plays there is a pervasive lyric element. In his early poetic plays, it was mainly the poetry that attracted his audiences. And in Abraham Lincoln the use of choruses indicates the presence of JD's lyric impulse. None of his chronicle-plays is really great drama because the structure is too episodic and because too much emphasis is focused on a single individual. [3]

Busey, Garreta H. "Representative Verse," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 16 Nov 1924, p. 10. Although JD's An Anthology of English Verse is adequately compiled, the volume suffers from a lack of notes as well as from too much evidence of JD's personality. [2]

"Byron," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXXV (21 Nov 1925), 938. JD succeeds partially in giving a balanced, rational account of Byron's life and art in The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron - a Conflict. However, JD adds little to a more accurate picture of Byron, and his remarks about Byron's poetry lack depth. [2]

"Cabbages and Queens," LIFE (NY), LXXVII (7 April 1921), 500. Although the prologue to Mary Stuart approaches the "burlesque" and the play itself is dull, a good stage performance can reveal a "hidden fire" and make the play, in spite of JD, "its own excuse for being." [Review also comments on the performance starring Clare Eames.] [2]

Carlton, W. N. C. "Literary Synthesis," BOOKMAN (NY), LVIII (Nov 1923), 330-32. The Outline of Literature, Vol. 1, edited by JD, is a disappointment. The selections are inadequate and the discussions of the literature weak. "As for grace of style, easy flow of narration, unity of concept, or vivid dramatization of material, they are not here." [3]

Carruthers, Thomas N. "Book Reviews," SEWANEE REVIEW, XXXIV (Oct-Dec 1926), 494-95. By a fortunate choice of episodes from Burns' life and by the constant use of Burns' songs, JD has made his Robert Burns an interesting, if dramatically unsuccessful, play. [1]

"Certain Poets," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXIII (21 Jan 1922), 64-65. In Seeds of Time, many of the poems fail because JD is too self-conscious and too given over to private moralizing. Occasionally, however, when he again becomes the "Cotswold piper," the poetry is original and rings true. [2]


Chaturvedi, B. N. ENGLISH POETIC DRAMA OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (Gwalior, India: Kitab Ghar, 1967), pp. 40-42. Although the conflict in Rebellion is presented well, JD's blank verse is unoriginal and his diction and imagery are poor. The Storm lacks dramatic power because the imagery is weak and the style is "meditative." Abraham Lincoln may be called "poetic tragedy" because, as in Shakespeare, the character of the hero transcends all other elements in the play. [3]

"Children's Christmas Books," NEW STATESMAN, XXXIV (7 Dec 1929), xxiv. JD shows insight into the world of children, but the verse in More About Me is not lively. [1]
"Christmas Books," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXLVIII (8 Dec 1928), 784. The verse in All About Me lacks both the charm of A. A. Milne and the simplicity necessary in a book for children. [1]


Clark, Edwin. "A Minor Poet," NEW YORK TRIBUNE, 29 July 1923, p. 22. The increase of passionate verse evident in JD’s Preludes, 1921-1922 should come as no surprise, for since his Poems, 1909-1919 his verse has gradually increased in emotional intensity. His achievement in Preludes, however, is not consistently fine. [2]

"Book Reviews," SEWANEE REVIEW, XXX (April-June 1922), 243-44. Although less subtle than his Mary Stuart, JD’s Robert E. Lee is a more dramatically effective play. Abraham Lincoln was a greater achievement, however, primarily as a result of its shorter time scheme. In Seeds of Time JD maintains the same quiet tone of his earlier verse; the twelve sonnets in this volume are particularly admirable for their restrained passion. [2]

"Book Reviews," SEWANEE REVIEW, XXXI (Oct-Dec 1923), 492. JD’s Preludes, 1921-1922 shows him writing successfully within his natural scope; when he attempts something more experimental, however, his self-consciousness becomes annoyingly apparent. [1]

"Claud Lovat Fraser," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 6 Sept 1923, p. 584. Claud Lovat Fraser by JD and Albert Rutherford remains the official record of Fraser’s career. [1]

Clemens, Cyril. "John Drinkwater, the Poet of Highgate," SEWANEE REVIEW, XL (Oct 1932), 442-45. [An interview with JD in which he discusses the writing of Pepys, His Life and Character, the great influence of collecting Confederate stamps on his interest in United States history, and his admiration for E. A. Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, Sandburg, and Twain.] [4]

"Colloquial Sketches and Precise Poetry." SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 15 Nov 1922, p. 10. The sketches in JD’s Cotswold Characters have simplicity as well as power; the prose style fits the subject perfectly. In Seeds of Time, JD shows emotional restraint, at times to the point of being unpoetic, but the verse is sincere. [1]

"Controversy About Books Usually Not Weighty," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 12 Nov 1927, p. 10. JD’s The Gentle Art of Theatre-going is unlikely to arouse American audiences. It stimulated controversy in England only because of St. John Ervine’s extreme criticism of it. Although the book is not remarkable, it is worthwhile reading, especially for literary critics. [2]

Cook, Sherwin Laurence. "Charles J. Fox - Statesman and Whig," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 22 Sept 1928, p. 5. Unlike his superficial historical plays, JD’s Charles James Fox is a
perceptive and scholarly biography. It shows a sympathetic understanding not only of Fox but of eighteenth-century England as well.

Cookman, A. V. "The Theatre," LONDON MERCURY, XXX (Oct 1934), 576-78. Notable for its "simplicity, directness and dignity," JD's A Man's House is an admirable attempt at serious drama. However, the difficulties of his theme ("doctrinal challenge") are not successfully overcome due to a lack of inspiration. This lack is apparent in the weak portrayal of incident and character.

"Cotswold Characters," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXVIII (23 Sept 1922), 409. JD's Cotswold Characters is overly sentimental.

"The Courteous Critic," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXIX (11 April 1925), 392. The essays in The Muse in Council show JD at his best as well as at his worst. Throughout, however, a fine critical sense is evident. The excellent article on Henley, for example, demonstrates that JD can rise above his usual attraction to "the hero whose sword is a thumping moral apothecary."

Crawford, Jack R. "Introduction," Pawns, Four Poetic Plays (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), pp. iii-v. JD's X=O, A Night of the Trojan War is the most moving of his poetic plays. All four restore to us the beauty of this world.

"John Drinkwater and Abraham Lincoln," DRAMA MAGAZINE (Chicago), X (Dec 1919), 95-96. The great success of JD's Abraham Lincoln stems from JD's bold structural experiment and his penetrating conception of Lincoln's character.

Crebbin, Barbara. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

"Cromwell and Others," NATIONAL GRAPHIC, CVII (2 June 1923), 818. JD's Oliver Cromwell, though dignified, has little theatrical force.

Croom-Johnson, A. "The Play of the Month: Lincoln and Parnell," REVIEW OF REVIEWS (Lond), LX (July 1919), 33-34. A welcome change in dramatic standards has allowed us to see that craftsmanship is secondary to vitality. The British stage needs moving, vital plays. JD's sincerity and idealism have enabled him to fulfill this need and make Abraham Lincoln, as is commonly recognized, "one of the greatest plays of recent years."

Cunliffe, John W. MODERN ENGLISH PLAYWRIGHTS: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA FROM 1825 (NY, Lond: Harper & Brothers, 1927), pp. 187-96. JD, along with Wildred W. Gibson, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Rupert Brooke, "came as near as is perhaps possible in England to forming a new school - the new 'Georgians.'" Of all his plays, Abraham Lincoln is the only real masterpiece certain to endure; it is emotionally stirring as well as artistically sound. Unlike his earlier plays - Rebellion, The Storm, and X=O, A Night of the Trojan War - the central element in Abraham Lincoln is a personality, not an idea. Although the great success of the play can be attributed in part to the time of its writing, when gratitude for and interest in America was particularly high, the character and life of Lincoln himself provided a more suitable subject for stage treatment than Oliver Cromwell, Robert E. Lee, or Mary Stuart.
"Current Literature," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXXIV (25 April 1925), 688. Although lacking in originality, the essays in JD's The Muse in Council are notable for their lucid style. [1]

"Current Literature," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLVII (7 Nov 1931), 620. Although JD's Inheritance is too personal to be lively, it gives ample evidence that his artistic spirit is essentially historical. [1]


D., N. H. "The Art of Letters," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 18 Nov 1916, p. 6. Given his premises, JD's arguments in The Lyric seem a waste of critical power. However, many of his distinctions may be of interest to the student of literature. [2]


"... Bibliographies of Modern Authors, No. 11 - John Drinkwater," BOOKMAN'S JOURNAL, I (26 March 1920), 421. [Descriptive bibliography of JD's works from 1914 to 1917. Updated in Danielson's BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF MODERN AUTHORS.] [5]

"... Bibliographies of Modern Authors, No. 11 - John Drinkwater," BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF MODERN AUTHORS (Lond: Bookman's Journal, 1921), pp. 41-60. [Descriptive bibliography of JD's works to 1921. An updating of Danielson's bibliographies in BOOKMAN'S JOURNAL.] [5]


de Selincourt, Basil. "Ideal England," MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 13 July 1937, p. 7. JD's Robinson of England is a sincere tribute to the English spirit in the manner of "the milder followers of Lamb." Had JD's volume not been so sentimental, it would have been a striking achievement. [3]


"De Gustibus Again," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 1 Nov 1924, p. 5. The arrangement of,
and introduction to, JD's An Anthology of English Verse are excellent. The selections are generally well made, the section of modern poems most subject to dispute. [2]

Dobrée, Bonamy. "A Batch of Plays," NATION AND ATHÉNÉEUM, XXXVIII (14 Nov 1925), 246 sup. JD's Robert Burns can hardly be called a play; it consists primarily of Burns' poetry. [1]

"Drama," LONDON MERCURY, VII (Nov 1922), 85-87. As a portrait of Mary Stuart, JD's Mary Stuart is a failure. Not only does the prologue bear little relation to the play, but the characterization of Mary leaves her a "miserable, paltry creature," unable to love. [3]


"A Drinkwater Comedy at the Royalty," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLXXII (28 April 1928), 774. JD's Bird in Hand is a diverting and enjoyable comedy divorced from ordinary life and its practical problems. The production at The Royalty Theatre was good. [1]

"Drinkwater Lectures," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 7 May 1932, pp. 11-12. In This Troubled World, JD offers some original insight into the problems of the modern world. His discussion of the influence of machines especially avoids time-worn arguments and advances from a new perspective. [2]

"The Drinkwater Play of Abraham Lincoln," AMERICAN REVIEW OF REVIEWS, LXI (Feb 1920), 210-11. JD's Abraham Lincoln is a great dramatic work; the first scene, however, is likely to disappoint because it is too prophetic of Lincoln's great future. [1]

"Drinkwater Presents Mary Stuart as the Superwoman," CURRENT OPINION, LXX (May 1921), 631-40. [Plot and excerpts of and scenes from JD's Mary Stuart. Includes a brief note on the production of the play and a portrait of JD.] [1]

"Drinkwater's Changing Moods," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 3 Dec 1922, p. 4. Although in Seeds of Time "emotion of the intellect sometimes predominates over emotion of the heart," JD's verse is sincere, simple, and clear. [3]

"Drinkwater's Ideas in Tale About Robinson," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 14 Sept 1937, p. 8. JD's Robinson of England appears somewhat autobiographical; certainly Robinson and his story have little purpose beyond voicing JD's own ideas. [1]

"Drinkwater's Latest," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 11 Aug 1923, p. 896. JD's Preludes, 1921-1922 has great simplicity but it is very bland. The poems are barely distinguishable from one another because "All things are equalized by the levelling touch of this verse writer's hand." [2]

"Drinkwater's Lee," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 16 Sept 1923, p. 7a. In Robert E. Lee, JD avoids the cumbersome poetic choruses used in Abraham Lincoln; however, the too great moral emphasis of the play weakens the character of Lee, and the hero has less vitality than the secondary characters. [2]
"Drinkwater's Rural Pen," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 15 July 1922, p. 804. As a poet, JD is mediocre. The verse in Seeds of Time is "mildly didactic" and undistinguished; at best it is graceful. The prose portraits in Cotswold Characters are decorously written and fancifully charming.  

Dukes, Ashley. "John Drinkwater," THE YOUNGEST DRAMA (Lond: Ernest Benn, 1923), pp. 150-56. The popular success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be attributed to the time of its writing, for it broke "the spiritual silence of five years" for the English. Its significance is closely tied to World War I and is therefore primarily "ethical, political, social." Mary Stuart shows JD's ability to write forceful, concise dialogue; however, the idea behind her character finds mainly intellectual, not dramatic expression. In Oliver Cromwell, JD's intellectual handling of character is more appropriate, for the essence of Cromwell's personality lies more truly in an abstract, moral realm. While many would begrudge Robert E. Lee true heroic stature, JD's Robert E. Lee proves Lee worthy of high regard. 

Durant, Kenneth. "Lincoln and Brown," NATION (NY), CIX (30 Aug 1919), 292-93. JD does very little with John Brown dramatically in Abraham Lincoln; however, he succeeds well in using "the John Brown motif," for it is only by contrasting Lincoln to John Brown that JD illustrates Lincoln's important moral decision about using force in the war.  

E., F. E. "The Literary World of Today," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 7 June 1924, p. 6. The three-volume The Outline of Literature, edited by JD, is excellent and will be particularly valuable as a reference work.  

Eaton, Anne T. "New Books for Children," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 7 Dec 1930, p. 45. JD's More About Me is an excellent volume that children should enjoy.  


.. "New Play of Mary Queen of Scots," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 13 Feb 1921, pp. 7, 10. As a dramatist, JD's significance lies in his attempts to make drama again a serious art form. His Mary Stuart shows his continued persistence to write stage drama that will be significant, not merely popular. [Includes some biographical details and information regarding the stage history of JD's Abraham Lincoln.]  

.. "Plays and so Forth," BOOKMAN (NY), LIII (April 1921), 172-74. In JD's Pawns; Four Poetic Plays, only X=0: A Night of the Trojan War is suitable for the stage. JD is not a natural dramatist, and Abraham Lincoln may be only a "happy accident."  


"The Eighteen-sixties," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 9 June 1932, p. 423. In order to mirror the artist's relation to his culture, JD, in editing The Eighteen-sixties; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, has been wise to eliminate essays on major poets and novelists. [2]

Ellehauge, Martin. STRIKING FIGURES AMONG MODERN ENGLISH DRAMATISTS (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1931; rptd Folcroft, Pa.; Folcroft Library Editions, 1971), pp. 69-88. Philosophically, JD's plays are "fatalistic." Against a fatalistic background, love is glorified in a manner similar to that of Continental naturalism, which "not only raises love above irrelevant duties, but also releases love from duties towards its objects, vindicates its right to change objects." All of JD's poetic plays express this; however, Mary Stuart represents this theory best. Although Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee both portray ideal romantic heroes to a large degree, Lincoln is in several ways an intellectual hero and Lee "is only an incarnation of fatal and destructive forces." JD's original artistic theory is not matched by originality in his plays. Often, in fact, his art contradicts his theory. Generally, however, his achievement is solid. [5]

"England Mourns John Drinkwater," CHRISTIAN CENTURY, LIV (21 April 1937), 528. [Obit of JD.] [1] Erskine, John. "Putting Literature into an Outline," LITERARY DIGEST INTERNATIONAL BOOK REVIEW, Oct 1923, pp. 32-33, 93. Although it is difficult to form a conclusive opinion until the project is completed, The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, shows great promise. It remains to be seen what point of view will be adopted to give the project unity, but it is difficult already not to quarrel with the relative importance assigned to several periods and authors. The aim of the outline is commendable, JD's introduction to the first volume is very good, and the initial result generally is impressive. [3]

Ervine, St. John. "John Drinkwater," NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, CCX (Dec 1919), 824-36. Despite the long list of qualities which argued against the popular success of JD's Abraham Lincoln, the play was a great success, popularly as well as artistically, because it "has taken a national character and made him into a figure of universal appeal." In this appeal lies the play's topical interest. JD's poetry and drama show his alignment with a long-established literary tradition. Nowhere in his work is there evidence of modern artistic "monkey tricks;" his work is concerned primarily with the "great simplicities." An important influence on Abraham Lincoln was Hardy's THE DYNASTS; in JD's The Storm the influence of Synge's RIDERS TO THE SEA is apparent. [Also contains some very brief biographical data.] [5]

........ "Preface," ENGLISH POETRY: AN UNFINISHED HISTORY (Lond: Methuen, 1938), pp. v - ix. Although some thought him "pompous" and disparaged his work, JD's "natural resentment" never manifested itself in vengeful attacks. His skillful and perceptive judgement of poets in English Poetry: An Unfinished History is not biased by his personal taste. [3]

"Essays and Criticisms," OUTLOOK (NY), CXLI (7 Oct 1925), 201. Although interesting and often insightful, JD's analysis in The Muse in Council that all expression is communication is faulty. [1]

"Essays on Literary Men of the 'Sixties," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 17 July 1932, p. 2. The Eighteen-sixties; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, edited by JD, revives overlooked writers of the decade with admirable insight and style. [2]

F., D. C. "New: April 18th," THEATRE WORLD (Lond), XVII (May 1932), 228. The production of JD's Napoleon - The Hundred Days at the New Theatre was "unduly heavy, verbose and slow-moving." Unfortunately, the scenes lacked "theatrical touches" and the actors were unable to bring the play to life. [2]


Farjeon, Herbert. "The London Stage," NATIONAL GRAPHIC, CXX (28 April 1928), 146-47. JD's Bird in Hand is a fine comedy. The young people in the play are unimaginatively drawn, but the rural idiom is handled exceptionally well. [Includes scenes from the play.] [1]


Feld, Rose C. "John Drinkwater Continues His Autobiography," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 19 March 1933, p. 5. Although lacking in humor, JD's Discovery is done with commendable restraint and simplicity. [2]

......... "John Drinkwater's Biography of Carl Laemmle," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 31 May 1931, p. 10. JD's The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle is remarkable mainly for its exaggerated "indulgence and glorification" of its subject. [3]

......... "John Drinkwater's Early Life of Village and Moor," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 22 Nov 1931, p. 4. JD's Inheritance accomplishes well its goal of presenting the effects of his cultural tradition. [1]

Field, Rachel. "The Poets Sing for Little People," NEW YORK EVENING POST, 10 Nov 1928, p. 10m. JD's All About Me is unsuitable for children, being overly involved and lacking real humor. [1]


Firkins, O. W. "English Voices," NATION (NY), CVII (24 Aug 1918), 201-3. Although some of JD's verse has real beauty,
passionate feeling is not sharply conveyed. The product is "not so much poetry as poetical discourse." [Review of Poems, 1908-1914.] [2]

... "John Drinkwater's Abraham Lincoln," REVIEW (NY), I (27 Dec 1919), 710-11. JD shows artistic insight by remodeling the traditional character of the Elizabethan chronicle-play to serve his purposes in Abraham Lincoln. Freeing himself from the demands of a plot and of historical accuracy, and stressing the delineation only of a single character, JD avoids the problems that make the framework of Shakespeare's Henry IV ultimately "clumsy." In Abraham Lincoln, all secondary characters and action serve to further the characterization of Lincoln. Portraying Lincoln exclusively as a gentleman, however, JD unfortunately neglects the psychology of his hero and "the obvious contrasts between humor and melancholy, between statesmanship and rail-splitting, between the elastic policy and the granite will." The first American performance of the play at the Cort Theatre (15 Dec 1919), though well received, was "undisciplined" and a disappointment. Frank McGlynn's role as Lincoln, especially, was unsatisfactory. [5]

... "Mary Stuart and THE GHOST BETWEEN," WEEKLY REVIEW (NY), IV (6 April 1921), 322-24. JD's Mary Stuart is a disservice to Mary; his presentation of her futile search for a love as great as her own makes her fatuous and assigns her to "a grade of intellect and character which the living Mary Stuart would have scorned." As a whole, the play is overly refined and cold. The prologue fails to establish the analogy between Mary's situation and the modern one presented. The Ritz Theatre performance "was of a distinguished merit . . . scarcely known in New York." Clare Eames' Mary was particularly excellent, despite JD's text. [Vincent Lawrence's THE GHOST BETWEEN may not have been published. No comparison with JD's play is made.] [3]

"The First Liberal Leader," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXLVI (27 Oct 1928), 544-45. In Charles James Fox, JD makes a "distinguished contribution" to the understanding of political history. Though not a professional historian, JD offers new evidence to support original interpretations of several controversies about Fox's career. [2]

Fisk, Earl E. "The Chesterton - Drinkwater - Lewis Affair," BOOKMAN (NY), LVIII (Jan 1924), 338-40. [An anecdote of a meeting in Chicago of G. K. Chesterton, Sinclair Lewis, and JD who agree to co-author a play, MARRY THE QUEEN OF SCOTCH. Present also is Fisk who is to write the preface. In the excitement, JD buys a first edition of Sheridan's THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL which Fisk had originally selected.] [2]

Fleming, Peter. "Homage to Hollywood," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLVI (23 May 1931), 825-26. JD's The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle is a commendable biographical effort. In addition to JD's uncritical account of the propaganda circulating during Laemmle's fight against the motion picture monopoly and his failure to detail many important aspects of Laemmle's life, JD's only mistake was to choose someone as unimportant as Laemmle to write about. [3]
The plays in JD's *Pawns: Three Poetic Plays* show that JD's abilities as a dramatist lie in his technique, not in his imagination. In *The Storm*, JD has not found a method of expressing the tension between characters. *The God of Quiet* shows JD's inability to convey irony. *X=O, A Night of the Trojan War* has so little verisimilitude that it is unbelievable. [3]

"Two English Poets," *FREEMAN*, V (5 July 1922), 403. The artificiality of JD's poetry is characteristic of a decadence that finds security in the English tradition but does not question the ability of that tradition "to bring forth a life worth living." Ultimately, it is "vicious" poetry because it completely ignores the unpleasant "facts of existence, to take refuge in a diet of weak sentiment and that sense of comfortable well-being which springs from the acceptance of one's own mediocrity." [Review of *Seeds of Time*.] [5]

Foerster, Norman. "Mr. Drinkwater's Outline," *FREEMAN*, VIII (28 Nov 1923), 283-84. The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, shows promise for the projected three-volume guide to literature. The selections are generally good and discussions of them deal with the important aspects informatively. The writers' styles are interesting and well suited to the book's audience. The chapters on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are the poorest, the chapter on Greek myths and poets seems unnecessary, and the bibliographies at the end of chapters are carelessly done. [4]

Forrest, Mark. "Uncle Carl," *SATURDAY REVIEW* (Lond), CLI (6 June 1931), 833-34. Although the distinction of his other biographical works will not be found in *The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle*, JD's study of Laemmle still has interest. [1]

"Four Plays," *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT* (Lond), 29 Sept 1927, p. 663. JD's *Bird in Hand* is skillfully managed comedy; however, at points, when he seems too aware of his audience, it becomes labored and contrived. [1]

Freeman, John. "John Drinkwater: the Plays of a Poet," *BOOKMAN* (Lond), LXI (Dec 1921), 125-28. In *Abraham Lincoln*, JD makes good use of historical materials and expands traditional dramatic forms. The directness and simplicity of the expression in the play is a welcome change from the artificiality of his lyrical poetry. The only flaws in the play are the "effusive" and "grotesque" poetry spoken by the Chroniclers and the play's overly serious tone. Although the action in the play is too slow, moral intensity compensates for it. In *Oliver Cromwell*, however, mild dramatic action is a more serious flaw. Cromwell works less well than Lincoln as a representation of a moral ideal; and JD's attempt to characterize him so disrupts the qualities of Cromwell's true historical greatness. The result is a play of "static coldness." [5]

Garland, Hamlin. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).
Gay, R. M. "The Outline of Literature." ATLANTIC'S BOOKSHELF, Oct 1923, n. p. The Outline of Literature, edited by JD, though at points only a synopsis of great literature, should provide an interesting and helpful introduction to literature for the general reader. [1]

Ghidelli, Carmen. JOHN DRINKWATER AND HIS HISTORICAL PLAYS: ABRAHAM LINCOLN, OLIVER CROMWELL, MARY STUART (Naples: Stabilimento Industry Editoriali Meridionali, [ca. 1937]). The popular success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be attributed to English gratitude for America's help in the war, and eventually the play's appeal may be considered overly sentimental; however, its fine artistry and dramatic power can not be denied. Oliver Cromwell and Mary Stuart were not nearly as successful primarily because Lincoln's character and life, especially his death, provided better and more effective dramatic material. [Cf. Cunliffe, pp. 189-90, 194-95.][4]

Gibson, Wilfred. "The 'Georgian Poets,' or Twenty Years After," BOOKMAN (Lond), LXXXII (Sept 1932), 280-82. [Brief references to JD in this evaluation of the works published in Marsh's GEORGIAN POETRY.][1]

Gorman, Herbert S. "E. A. Robinson and Some Others," BOOKMAN (NY), LXI (July 1925). 595-98. Although the poetry in JD's New Poems shows maturity as well as impressive technique, it is uninspired and cold. [1]

"Lord Byron as Man, Poet, Force in Drinkwater's Fine Biography," WORLD (NY), 20 Dec 1925, p. 6m. In his biography The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron - a Conflict, JD wisely avoids moral judgement and does not needlessly puzzle over the unavoidable problems inherent in a sketch of Byron's life. The alleged incestuous relationship between Byron and Augusta Leigh, for example, is clearly described and all the facts, as throughout the book, are assiduously documented. But while JD favors Byron's innocence, he refrains from forming a final opinion. In this way, JD is able to give a stimulating, accurate picture of a biographically controversial figure. [3]

"Plays, Literary and Unliterary," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 20 March 1921, p. 10. As evidenced by his Pawns: Four Poetic Plays, JD cannot be termed a great artist because his work is undistinctive and often didactic. However, he is to be admired for his abilities as a craftsman and for his "practical dramatic sense." [4]

"Tradition and Experiment in Modern Poetry," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 27 March 1927, p. 2. The poetry in JD's Persephone is heavily influenced by long-established British tradition. [1]

Gowda, H. H. Anniah. THE REVIVAL OF ENGLISH POETIC DRAMA (Mysore, India: Literary Half-Yearly [University of Mysore], 1963; enlgd ed Bombay: Orient Longman, 1972), pp. 180, 195, 196, 207-19, 220. Gibson's, Abercrombie's, and JD's attempts to revive and reform poetic drama were most successful when they wrote one-act verse plays. JD's poetic dramas, "a challenge to the stultifying realism of the debating drama," are noteworthy for both structure and dialogue. Of them, X=0, A Night of the Trojan War is the best. The other verse plays exhibit various flaws in dramatic execution; in
Cophetua and Rebellion, the characterization and verse are immature; in The Storm "meek submission to the inevitable" destroys dramatic conflict; in The God of Quiet the plot is weak. "Except in X=0 we remember the poetry and not the drama." [5]

Graves, Robert. "The Victorian Pageant," NATION AND ANTHEM, XXXIV (29 Dec 1923), 492-93. JD's Victorian Poetry will make a very good textbook, but it will have little value otherwise. A central problem for the non-academic reader will be that exceptions to JD's generalizations are insufficiently qualified. The most serious fault of the volume is JD's omission of important authors - Hardy, Meredith, and Fitzgerald, for example. [4]

"Great Lives," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CLV (4 Feb 1933), 121. JD's Shakespeare is a clear, rationally sound, and useful biography of Shakespeare. [1]

Greene, Graham. "The Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CLIII (27 July 1934), 129. JD's general idea for A Man's House was very good, and the initial scenes of the play held great promise. Overall, however, the construction of the play lacks expertness: Religious inspiration must not be dealt with superficially; the theme of Mr. Drinkwater's play seems banal because it is too great for him." The production at the Malvern Festival Theatre was poorly staged; however, the acting was good. [5]

Gregory, Russell. "A Very Indifferent Play," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CLVIII (22 Sept 1934), 155. JD's A Man's House can barely be termed dramatic; obviously what he has attempted lies beyond his powers. [1]

Grein, J. T. "The World of the Theatre," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLXXXV (29 Sept 1934), 482. JD is to be commended for his experimentation with theme and form in A Man's House, despite the fact that unresolved difficulties detract from the play's emotional impact. The action is too slow and the play does not successfully build to a final, emotional climax. [4]

Grosser, Alfred. "Das Bild eines Führers im englischen Unterricht: John Drinkwaters Abraham Lincoln" (The Portrait of a Leader in the English Class: John Drinkwater's Abraham Lincoln) . DIE NEUEREN SPRACHEN, XLIV (1936), 23-26. [Article discounts the poetic genius of JD's dramatic works including Abraham Lincoln, but claims that Abraham Lincoln can be used effectively in German secondary schools as an introduction to American culture at the time of the Civil War.] [In German.] [1]

Guiterman, Arthur. "Book Reviews," INDEPENDENT, CVIII (22 April 1922), 396-97. In Seeds of Time, JD shows a lack of originality and liveliness; the poems are, however, technically well written and have charm. [2]

H., F. "After the Play," NEW REPUBLIC, XXI (31 Dec 1919), 148. The major flaw of JD's Abraham Lincoln is the overdone choruses spoken by the chronicler. JD captures well
Lincoln's essential character. Frank McGlynn, despite his resemblance to Lincoln physically, did not manage to convey Lincoln's spirit. He played the leading role with too great an emphasis on Lincoln the statesman, and not enough on Lincoln the man. [2]

H., K. T. "Belles Lettres," BOOKMAN. (Lond), XLIX (Dec 1915), 4-5 sup. Swords and Ploughshares by JD is a good volume of war poetry. His subjects are treated with an appropriately dignified style. [2]

H., S. "Mr. Charles on His Throne," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 2 Feb 1927, p. 4. In Mr. Charles, King of England, JD wisely keeps his narrative focused on his subject. Although the book is intelligently written, JD treats his subject too sympathetically, even to the point of putting Charles outside the bounds of rational moral judgement. [3]

H., W. E. "John Drinkwater: He Makes a Beginning at His Autobiography." BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 26 Dec 1931, p. 4. JD's Inheritance is more imaginative than historical; however, American readers will find this autobiography very impersonal. [1]

Hackett, Francis. "Two Plays," NEW REPUBLIC, XX (1 Oct 1919), 268-69. JD's Abraham Lincoln, despite faulty attempts at local color, conveys well the reality, though not the actuality, of Lincoln and his time. The play has been well conceived and reveals the mind, the spirit, the will, the heart, and the imagination of Lincoln. [3]

Hamilton, Clayton. SEEN ON THE STAGE (NY: Henry Holt, 1920), pp. 17-21. By understanding his case for Lincoln, JD has produced a drama that is "singularly beautiful in its reticence, and all the more impressive by reason of its shy and quiet dignity." [3]

Hamilton, Joseph Gregoire de Roulhac. "A Caricature of Lee," GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS (North Carolina), 23 Sept 1923, P-8. From an historical perspective, JD's Robert E. Lee is full of "absurd" errors which make the play a weak interpretation of the South during the Civil War. Although JD claims freedom from historical accuracy, his Lee is far less dramatic than the real one. Had JD been more familiar with Lee's actual history and character, he might have produced a play not so "notably dull, stale, flat, and entirely unprofitable." [4]

Hannam-Clark, Theodore. DRAMA IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE (THE COTSWOLD COUNTRY; SOME ACCOUNT OF ITS DEVELOPMENT FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TILL TO-DAY (Gloucester: Minchin & Gibbs; Lond: Simkin Marshall, 1928), pp. 161, 171, 174. For some time, JD lived and wrote at Oakridge, Gloucestershire. He wrote The Storm there. The scene of Bird in Hand, a "Cotswold Comedy," is "the Bird-in-Hand, Gloucester." [2]

Harris, William E. "John Drinkwater's Last Message a Whimsy," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 11 Sept 1937, p. 4. Because it falls short of achieving a lyrical vision on an epic scale, JD's Robinson of England is not a great success. Its chief fault is JD's inability to convey emotional feeling without moralizing. [3]

JD's Robert E. Lee is theatrically effective but as a dramatic subject Lee is not entirely suitable. In the Jefferson Davis scene, Lee's collapse is "dramatically unforgivable." [3]

"General Lee as a Tragic Hero," LITERARY DIGEST INTERNATIONAL BOOK REVIEW, Nov 1923, pp. 46, 93. In his Robert E. Lee, JD's conception of Lee as totally uncomplex ought to be questioned. However, the weakness of his play is that Lee's reasons for fighting are presented inadequately. Additionally, the secondary characters are mechanical. It seems as if JD has tried to write an epic, not a drama. [3]

Henderson, Philip. "Mr. Drinkwater's Autobiography," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLIX (25 Nov 1932), 761. Although honest, JD's Discovery lacks interest because it is difficult to determine why his biographical facts have any peculiar significance. [1]

Hind, C. Lewis. AUTHORS AND I (NY: John Lane, 1921; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1968), pp. 86-90. JD was able to write his great Abraham Lincoln for two reasons. First, although only "touched lightly" by the muse, his contemplative poetic imagination was ignited by Lord Charnwood's monograph on Lincoln. More importantly, his considerable practical experience in the theatre led him to hit naturally on the most effective style for his drama. [4]

"Two Americans," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXII (16 July 1921), 80-81. The production of JD's Abraham Lincoln at the Lyceum Theatre was very well done, despite the occasional over-acting of William J. Rea as Lincoln. JD's expert handling of his theme makes for a powerful play. [1]

"Histoire" (History), MERCURE DE FRANCE (Paris), CCXIII (1 July 1931), 157-58. In La Vie de Cromwell, a translation of JD's Cromwell, a Character Study by Roger Gaucheron, JD maintains an admirably just and tactful tone. JD omits no important fact of Cromwell's career. He demonstrates well why Cromwell is the source of English liberties and refutes the theatrical theories of Cromwell's ambitious nature. [In French.] [2]

"Historic Figures on the Stage," THEATRE MAGAZINE, XXXIII (June 1921), 394, 448. [An interview with JD in which he explains that his plays use historical subjects in order to illuminate abstract themes. He also refutes the claim that the prologue and epilogue of Mary Stuart have no relation to play itself.] [5]

"History," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 1 Dec 1927, p. 914. JD's Cromwell, a Character Study gives a convincing, eloquent, and, at the same time, realistic portrait of Cromwell's personality. [1]

Horsnell, Horace. "Comedy," OUTLOOK (Lond), LXI (28 April 1928), 533. JD's farce Bird in Hand is exceptionally amusing. The production at the Royalty Theatre was well acted. [1]

Houck, Isabelle. "Book of Poetry for Children," WORLD (NY), 28 Oct 1928, p. 9e. JD's All About Me is a delightful book of verse which children are certain to like. [1]
Hutchison, Percy A. "Drinkwater's Life of Byron Is Dignified, But Never Dull," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 27 Dec 1925, pp. 9, 25. In The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron - A Conflict, JD has written an outstanding biography, lively, unsentimental, and well reasoned. While JD devotes too much space to Byron's love affairs and not enough to his place in the romantic movement, he does include some hitherto unpublished passages from Clare Clairmont's diary which helps to assess Byron's character. [4]

Human Frailty the Theme of Two New Plays," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 13 Dec 1925, p. 5. JD has erred by using the form of the chronicle play for his Robert Burns, for the play is almost completely without dramatic force. Rather, in relying heavily on Burns' own lyrics, JD has produced more of an anthology than a drama. [4]

"Imported American Martyrdom," DRAMATIST, X (Oct 1919), 974-75. Notably lacking in dramatic conflict, JD's Abraham Lincoln will succeed in America only if the role of Lincoln is well cast. [1]


"In Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LXI (Aug 1925), 715. JD's The Muse in Council is a just and frank examination of poetry and poets. [1]

"In Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LXIV (Feb 1927), 750. JD's portrait of Charles II in Mr. Charles, King of England is sympathetic, just, and realistic. [1]


Jameson, Storm. "New English Plays," YALE REVIEW, XI (Jan 1922), 425-30. Despite its weak prologue, JD's Mary Stuart is well conceived and, with great economy and simplicity, expertly executed. [3]

"Japanese Lincoln," LIFE (Chicago), XX (8 April 1946), 77-78, 80. [A brief description of and scenes from the production of JD's Abraham Lincoln by the Kabuki Players at Tokyo's Imperial Theater.] [2]

Jennings, Richard. "Shall We Go to the Theatre?" SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXXVIII (18 June 1927), 1086. In The Gentle Art of Theatre-going, JD appears as a congenial and knowledgeable guide. In discussing serious theatre ("theatre of the imagination"), JD's description of the ideal drama seems far above his taste, for several of his examples of near ideal plays are second-rate dramas. [3]

"The Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXL (5 May 1928), 675. Though lively, JD's Bird in Hand overly concerns itself with local comic personalities. [1]
"John Drinkwater Analyzes Patriotic Devotion - Love of Place an Important Element," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 7 Sept 1924, p. 7a. While Patriotism in Literature does not exhaustively accomplish the task of constructing an original analysis of the qualities associated with patriotism, in successfully combining "the insight of the poet with that of the political philosopher," JD has made a "profound, methodical and instructive" start. [2]


Jones, Walter Howe. "Mary Stuart - Queen of Love," THEATRE MAGAZINE, XXXIII (May 1921), 318, 320. Unlike his Abraham Lincoln, JD's Mary Stuart depends only slightly on historical background. By making the background of the play indistinct, JD forcefully brings out the essence of his heroine's character. [1]

K., L. S. "Drinkwater - Poet," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 13 June 1925, p. 1: The verse in JD's New Poems lacks the musical tones produced by expert handling of metrics. JD's more serious lyrics, however, do have some merit. [1]

Kaufman, S. Jay. "Mary Stuart: New Drinkwater Play Opens the Ritz," DRAMATIC MIRROR, LXXXIII (26 March 1921), 527. JD's Mary Stuart is a poor play: the poetry works against the drama and the characterization of Mary is weak. Nevertheless, the production and the acting were exceptionally good. [2]

Kernahan, Coulson. SIX FAMOUS LIVING POETS (Lond: Butterworth, 1922; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1968), pp. 219-86. JD's poetry is remarkable for its sincerity, precise craftsmanship, and moral seriousness. The lack of spontaneity and imagination which detracts from his achievement can be attributed to his "self-consciousness." JD's style often seems affected because he trusts to the intellect rather than to inspiration. However, the fault seems almost intentional, for in his artistic theory he argues for the necessity of self-consciousness. In his early verse, and in his later verse when he forgets his theories, he is most successful. [4]

Kreymborg, Alfred. "Two More Anthologies," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), VI (21 June 1930), 1139-40. The English section of Twentieth-century Poetry, edited by JD, is generally good; however, it is regrettable that JD refuses to give a representative sampling of the poetry of the more experimental poets such as Lawrence, Aldington, Flint, and the Sitwells. [4]

K[ru[cher], J[oseph] W[ood]. "Drama Note," NATION (NY), CLV (31 Oct 1942), 458. The production of JD's Bird in Hand at the Morosco Theater was well done, despite the play's lack of weight. [1]
Krutch, Joseph Wood. "Passed by the Censor," NATION (NY), CXXVIII (24 April 1929), 514. JD's Bird in Hand is distinguished by a lack of originality; however, JD, adept at handling character, dialogue, and humor, keeps it from falling flat. Like his other plays, Bird in Hand is marked by an "all-pervading mildness" which assures its mediocrity. [5]


"Laemmle's Place in Motion Picture Field," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 6 Sept 1931, p. 7e. JD's vivid narrative in The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle reads less like the life story of an individual than "the story of a romantic enterprise of the modern world." [1]

Laver, James. "An Intimate Friend," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLV (25 Oct 1930), 599. JD's Pepys: His Life and Character is valuable because it balances the picture of Pepys the diarist with the one of Pepys the public servant, while at the same time stimulating new interest in the diary of Pepys. [2]

"Lee as a Drinkwater Hero," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 26 Aug 1923, p. 15. The dramatic form of Robert E. Lee again shows why JD is the most "arresting" English dramatist today. Like Abraham Lincoln, the Lee play dispenses with unity of plot in order to achieve its classical, epic goals. And like his portrait of Lincoln, JD's portrayal of Lee is a notable accomplishment. [3]

Lee, Rose. "Here and There in the Theatre," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 6 Nov 1927, pp. 8, 27. JD's The Art of Theatre-going carries a sound argument to inappropriately didactic lengths. [1]

LeGallienne, Richard. "Mr. Drinkwater Champions the Great Victorians," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 29 June 1924, p. 3. JD's artistic affiliations and age well qualify him to examine with insight and objectivity the great Victorian poets. Victorian Poetry is an excellent volume marked by rare perception and judgement. JD's analysis of Tennyson's poetry and influence is particularly important and convincing. [4]

"Now the Outline of Literature," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 29 July 1923, p. 4. Despite some overstated comparisons between ancient and modern authors and some lapses in taste regarding Greek myths, The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, is praiseworthy both in conception and execution. [3]

Lewis, D. E. Wyndham. "Napoleon and Some Other Bodies," NATIONAL GRAPHIC, I (28 April 1932), 43-44. JD's adaption of Musso- lini and Forzano's Napoleon - The Hundred Days, though a good play, could have been a very fine one had its conception been more dramatic and less historical. [3]
Lewisohn, Ludwig. "British Plays," NATION (NY), CXIV (4 Jan 1922), 20-21. In Oliver Cromwell, JD disregards both the historical facts of Cromwell's life and the historical focus of the seventeenth century that shaped him. JD presents him, rather, as a "symbolical citizen-saint." Although it has a certain theatrical charm, such a portrait of Cromwell lacks importance as an historical drama. [3]

"A Chronicle Play," NATION (NY), CX (3 Jan 1920), 858-59; rptd in THE DRAMA AND THE STAGE (NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), pp. 78-83. The production of JD's Abraham Lincoln dispels the historical criticism that the play gives only a sentimental portrait of Lincoln, for on stage JD's Lincoln symbolizes well the moral ideal which the author intended. JD's achievement is but little dimmed by several ineffective secondary characters and the overly emphasized moral dimension of Lincoln early in the play. As the leading actor in the production at The Cort Theatre, Frank McGlynn was excellent. [4]

"John Drinkwater," NATION (NY), CXII (13 April 1921), 564, 566. Although the idea behind JD's Mary Stuart is promising, the play is a disappointment. JD's earlier success in the one-act verse drama suggests that Mary Stuart might have been remarkable had it been written in that form. It is through verse that JD's real dramatic power emerges. [3]

"A Lieutenant and a Lord on Lincoln," LITERARY DIGEST (NY), LXIII (25 Oct 1919), 30-32. The chief flaws in JD's Abraham Lincoln are its sentimentality, its lack of local color, and its awkward handling of the American idiom. Historical inaccuracies and the static nature of Lincoln's character are less serious problems. These faults may be forgiven, however, because the impression conveyed to an English audience is both "profound" and "true." It is doubtful whether the play could succeed on an American stage. [3]

"The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle," FORUM AND CENTURY (Phila), LXXXV (June 1931), xi. As fiction, JD's The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle is uninteresting; as history it is undependable, in many cases overplaying Laemmle's historical importance. [1]

"Lincoln and Shakespeare," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 5 Dec 1920, pp. 1, 16. To the skeptical, JD's Lincoln: The World Emancipator will fail to convince, and the chapter of imaginary conversation between Lincoln and Shakespeare will seem vulgar. To the sympathetic, however, the entire book will seem forceful and artistically sound. [3]


"The Lincoln Myth," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXVII (3 May 1919), 417-18. As a theater piece, JD's Abraham Lincoln is excellent. Although the production at the Hammersmith Theatre was basically sound, the attempt at American dialect was unwise, and the scene between Grant and Lee and the assassination scene were both poorly staged and unsuccessful. The lack of humor in the play makes JD's portrait of Lincoln deceptive. By making him a moral ideal, JD has distorted the picture of Lincoln the man. [4]
"Literary," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 4 May 1922, p. 294. [Description of the contents of JD's Cotswold Characters.] [1]

"Literary," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 3 Jan 1924, p. 10. In Victorian Poetry, JD's appreciation is sound because he wisely concentrates on only a few major figures. [1]

"Literature: William Morris," ATHENAEUM (Lond), No. 4423 (3 Aug 1912), 109-10. JD's William Morris: A Critical Study shows great critical insight; his analysis of Morris as a potential dramatist is original. JD, however, overestimates Morris' place among Victorian poets. [3]


... . . . . . . AUTHORS DEAD AND LIVING (NY: Macmillan, 1926; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1968), pp. 210-13. With rare exceptions, JD's poetry is of only mediocre quality. While his verse exhibits the qualities of "culture, talent, a generous and sympathetic personality, fundamental hard work," there is no evidence of imagination or vitality. [4]

Lynd, Sylvia. "Christmas Books," NEW STATESMAN, XXXII (1 Dec 1928), xx, xxi. JD's All About Me is "simple fun." [1]

M., D. L. "The Return of the Stuarts," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXI (30 Sept 1922), 862, 864. The characterization of Mary in JD's Mary Stuart demonstrates an advancement in JD's dramatic sensitivity and abilities over Abraham Lincoln. In the production of the play, Laura Cowie's Mary was excellent and JD's staging was typically fine. [2]

M., E. "Shorter Notices," FREEMAN, VIII (31 Oct 1923), 191. In Robert E. Lee, JD presents an unrealistic collection of noble, heroic sentiments to describe the Civil War. Both Lee and his army are so gentlemanly that one is tempted to conclude that "the opposing armies must have killed each other off by the sheer force of their noble indignation." [4]

M., H. G. "New: September 11th," THEATRE WORLD (Lond), XXII (Oct 1934), 161. The characterization and conflict of forces in JD's A Man's House are handled well. The performance of the play was very good. [1]

MacCarthy, Desmond. "A Chronicle Play," NEW STATESMAN, XII (8 March 1919), 498. JD was fortunate in the choice of Lincoln for his hero. Public knowledge of and interest in Lincoln enables the unlikely structure of Abraham Lincoln to work. Unwisely, JD did not bring out the "rustic raciness" of his hero and did not create enough dramatic tension between Lincoln and the secondary characters. The device of the chorus between each scene is completely unsuccessful. [Brief mention of the production at the Lyric Opera House.] [4]

McIntyre, O. O. "Theatre," LIFE (NY), XCIII (26 April 1929), 20. JD's comedy Bird in Hand is not funny and is little more than "repetitious theorizing" about the trivial. The New York performance, however, was well cast. [2]
Macy, John. "Library Essays," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), IV (3 Sept 1927), 83-84. With the attitude of the perfect bibliophile, JD, in A Book for Bookmen, stimulates great interest in minor literary figures. [3]

"A Man Born to Be Loved," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLI (6 Oct 1928), 457-58. JD's Charles James Fox presents Fox's career and personality with rare dramatic skill. [1]


"A Martian Among the Poets," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXV (15 July 1922), 105-6. JD's early poems are his best. The later poetry exhibits a "Johnsonian polysyllabic frigidity" which makes his verse seem false. [Review of Selected Poems of John Drinkwater.] [2]

"Mary Stuart," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXVIII (4 May 1921), 12-13. Although at times attaining a very high quality of drama, JD's Mary Stuart is a disappointment. The prologue and epilogue have a different thematic focus than the part devoted to dramatizing Mary Stuart; even the part devoted to Mary is poorly developed. [2]

"Mary Stuart," THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE, V (July 1921), 253. JD's Mary Stuart is admirably restrained and subtle. The opening and closing modern scenes, however, detract greatly. [1]

"Mary Stuart New Drinkwater Play Dedicates the Ritz," NEW YORK CLIPPER, 30 March 1921, p. 23. Although the prologue to JD's Mary Stuart is unnecessary, the play itself is more eloquent and more humanized than even Abraham Lincoln. The production at the Ritz was excellent, especially Clare Eames' Mary Stuart. [2]

Masefield, John. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

Mason, Eugene. "John Drinkwater," BOOKMAN (Lond), LVI (May 1919), 70-72; rptd in CONSIDERED WRITERS OLD AND NEW (Lond: Methuen, 1925), pp. 215-24. As a critic, JD is at his best when dealing with abstract subjects, as in the essays "Poetry and Conduct" and "The Nature of Drama"; his critical prose is most important, however, for what it tells us about his own preferences and artistic aims. His chief critical fault is overstressing the importance of writers who are his friends. JD is most successful as a poet. Committed to the "secure highway of our national literature," he is the most "English" poet today. Although not as admirable artistically as his poetry, JD's plays, especially Abraham Lincoln, have justly received popular stage success. [4]

Mathews, Godfrey William. THE POETRY OF JOHN DRINKWATER (Liverpool: E. A. Bryant, 1925). The philosophy that underlies all of JD's work, "the realization of the unity of all things," is expressed in his examination of the little things, the commonplace. His fears are real, his attitudes towards his lowly subjects un patronizing. Because of his
basically Puritan ethic his love poetry may not "strike the note of passion," but in technique he surpasses Masefield, and he remains "pre-eminently the modern poet of domesticity." [5]

Mégroz, R. L. "Mr. John Drinkwater: Poet - Dramatist," REVIEW OF REVIEWS (Lond), LXVIII (July-Aug 1923), 20-25. JD is the primary force behind the current revival of interest in serious theater; this is due in large part to the success of Abraham Lincoln. JD's reputation will certainly rest upon Abraham Lincoln and his three poetic plays. To varying degrees, his other historical plays are flawed. The chief reason behind Oliver Cromwell's lack of success was the unfortunate choice of Henry Ainly as lead. Mary Stuart is JD's only "radically unsound" drama, for in it he does not present Mary as a character torn by her passions. Robert E. Lee demonstrates a failing common to all of JD's work, a lack of humor; without it, the author's moralizing becomes overbearing. [4]

Meltzer, Charles Henry. "From Lincoln to Cromwell," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXXIV (18 July 1923), 431-32. Unlike his Abraham Lincoln and Mary Stuart, JD's Oliver Cromwell is a thorough disappointment; it is a "weak, unreal, and dull creation." The scenes are poorly linked together, the use of quotation is overdone, the climax is ineffective, the personalities of Cromwell and his friends are poorly revealed, and the use of stage devices is not always mature. JD's conception of Cromwell as a "pure hero" keeps him from portraying Cromwell as a great tragic figure. [5]

"London Applauds Civil War Hero," THEATRE MAGAZINE, XXXVIII (Sept 1923), 12, 70. JD has proved himself an able "chronicler"; it now remains for him to establish his reputation as a real "dramatist." Although some of the historical details will destroy the effect of the play on American audiences, his Robert E. Lee is a well written, forceful drama. Oliver Cromwell, on the other hand, is a disappointment because the idealization of Cromwell's character is simply dishonest. [2]

"Plays Tragic, Comic, Flippant and Prosaic," ARTS AND DECORATION, XV (May 1921), 23, 59-60. As literature, JD's Mary Stuart is of greater importance and of higher quality than Abraham Lincoln. However, not all will agree with JD's conception of Mary Stuart, and the play is not as convincing as the Lincoln play. It is difficult to accept his idealized portrait of the queen, but the play's success depends on this. The only technical flaw in the drama is the inappropriate prologue. The production of the play at the Ritz Theater, particularly Clare Eames' Mary, was excellent. [4]

"Men and Women of To-day," WORLD TODAY (Lond), XXXVII (Jan 1921), 114-15, 118. [Article recounts the very general biographical facts of JD's career. Also includes a portrait of JD by Elliott and Fry.] [1]
Metcalfe. "For All Americans," LIFE (NY), LXXIV (25 Dec 1919), 1070-71. Despite one "cheaply theatrical episode," JD's Abraham Lincoln is a stirring drama. Frank McGlynn's Lincoln was particularly notable; Albert Phillips' Grant was also impressive. [1]

Miles, Hamish. "A Revivisation and Two Revivals," NEW STATESMAN, XXI (9 June 1923), 268-69. JD's Oliver Cromwell is a dull, unsuccessful attempt to bring Cromwell to life. Only one scene shows the conflict of truly great forces. The fundamental weakness of the play stems from JD's inability to write convincing dialogue and his idealized conception of Cromwell as a "humorless moraliser." [2]

"Milestones," TIME, XXIX (5 April 1937), 80. [Obit of JD.] [1]

"Mr. Drinkwater on the Nature and Practice of Poetry," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 3 May 1925, p. 11. Except for his Abraham Lincoln, which has caused JD's reputation to become "over-rated," JD's distinction as an artist rests primarily on the great care he takes in constructing his works and on his lack of imagination. These two qualities are also evident in JD's critical volume The Muse in Council. Although at times very perceptive, the essays add little to the appreciation of poetry of poets. The resurrection of Francis Ledwidge is the most valuable piece in this collection of critical essays. [4]

"Mr. Drinkwater Presents Oliver Cromwell," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 18 Dec 1927, p. 2. Unlike Carlyle, JD, in Oliver Cromwell, a Character Study, shows Cromwell's character through action, not words. Although not accurate history, JD's volume is a vivid narrative of Cromwell's career. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater Saunters on Some Literary By-paths," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 3 July 1927, p. 2. Although many of the essays in JD's A Book for Bookmen are unimportant, the volume publishes for the first time much valuable information. The essays on John Collop and Coleridge are particularly good. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Anthology," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 17 Dec 1924, p. 10. Although the selection of verse is governed solely by his personal taste, JD's An Anthology of English Verse is a "responsible" collection, including both narrative and elegiac poetry and combining well the familiar and unfamiliar. [1]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Byron," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXVIII (19 Dec 1925), 442. JD's The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron - A Conflict is a restrained and scholarly estimation of Byron's life. However, by limiting itself to the certain facts of Byron's life, JD's portrait loses the rich color it needs to do justice to a man who became a legend. [2]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Byron," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 26 Nov 1925, p. 791. JD's The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron - A Conflict is an exciting biography linking well Byron's life with his work. Unfortunately, however, JD's restrained tone degenerates to "dogmatic accuracy," and JD refuses to make necessary conclusions about several of the important conflicts in Byron's life. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Collected Poems," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXVI (8 Dec 1923), 622, 624. The poetry of JD is often didactic and frequently sounds like mere imitation. In The Collected Poems of John Drinkwater, the author displays
"an almost fatal habit of writing lines which sound like poetry instead of being poetry." Occasionally, however, the verse is not didactic or simply decorous and the result is excellent, imaginative poetry. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Mary Stuart at Everyman's," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLXI (7 Oct 1922), 560. JD's Mary Stuart is poorly conceived. His Mary is not a great lover of "devastating temperament"; rather, she is merely an "experimentalist" in love, and one who lacks passion. As a result of this faulty characterization the prologue, which introduces Mary's modern counterpart, is meaningless. The play was well received at Everyman's and the acting was good, despite these flaws. [4]

"Mr. Drinkwater's New Play," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 7 April 1921, p. 225. In Mary Stuart, JD has admirably dramatized Mary's beauty, intelligence, vitality, and tragic frustration as a lover. However, he does little to indicate what was the essence of Mary's disappointment in love. [4]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Oliver Cromwell at His Majesty's," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLXII (9 June 1923), 1016. JD's one-sided, "Puritan view" of Cromwell in Oliver Cromwell accounts for the play's lack of color: "we miss what was grim and repellent in his [Cromwell's] masterfulness." The production at His Majesty's was very good. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Pepys," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 13 Nov 1930, p. 936. JD's admirable study Pepys, His Life and Character skillfully and for the first time gives a fair estimation of Pepys' career as a public servant and brings that picture into balance with the more well known one of Pepys the diarist. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Plays," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 20 Sept 1917, p. 448. In his Pawns: Three Poetic Plays, JD has gone a long way toward restoring poetic drama to the modern stage. These plays have been written for the stage, and many of their seeming defects, such as meter, are actually assets to stage production. X=Ω, A Night of the Trojan War is the best of the three plays in conception, craftsmanship, and tone. [4]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Robert E. Lee at The Regent," ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, CLXII (30 June 1923), 1174. In Robert E. Lee, JD's treatment of history is interesting and his handling of dialogue striking and poetic. Lee, however, is a completely "static" character. The complete lack of development makes it difficult to categorize this play as drama. The production at The Regent was excellent. [3]

"Mr. Drinkwater's Youth," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 6 Oct 1932, p. 705. [A description of the contents of JD's Discovery.] [1]


Monaghan, Frank. "A Man to Be Loved," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), (22 Dec 1928), 535. Charles James Fox is flawed by JD's inability to see faults in Fox, and secondarily by lengthy
quotations, errors of fact, and the lack of an index. [3]

Monro, Harold. SOME CONTEMPORARY POETS (1920) (Lond: Leonard Parsons, 1920; rptd Folcroft Pa: Folcroft Library Editions, 1972), pp. 26, 180-84. In JD's poetry from 1908 to 1912, Swinburne, Morris, and Rossetti are the primary influences. This verse of JD's, lacking any individual distinctiveness, is marked only by a "speciously noble manner" and affected diction. After 1912, Housman's influence becomes noticeable; and in Loyalties (1919) other influences appear. [4]

Monroe, H[arriet]. "Drinkwater on Abercrombie," POETRY, XVIII (April 1921), 30-35. Recently in Chicago, JD claimed that Lascelles Abercrombie is at present the most important young poet writing. However, Abercrombie is too derivative to be considered so important. Moreover, his "over-intellectualized motives, and his lush and leaden style," which the Georgians praise, exemplify a serious general flaw in much contemporary poetry. [5]

"M. John Drinkwater," FRANCE - GRANDE BRETAGNE, April 1937, pp. 98-100. [Article includes a tribute, in French, to JD, whose death prevented him from lecturing on 9 April 1937 at the Sorbonne. Also included is the prologue, in English, to JD's scheduled speech by M. F. Delattre, professor at the Sorbonne.] [Partly in French and English.] [1]

Moore, Virginia. "New Poems by John Drinkwater," ATLANTIC'S BOOKSHELF, June 1925, n.p. The verse in JD's New Poems is admirable for its restraint; however, the vitality of Masefield, the style of Aldington, and the intellectual capacity of E. A. Robinson are far above JD's abilities. [3]

"More About Me," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 3 Jan 1931, p. 3. JD's More About Me is completely charming, a perfect book for children. [1]

Morgan, A. E. TENDENCIES OF MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA (Lond: Constable; NY: Scribner's, 1924), pp. 257, 277-90, 301. JD's achievement in poetic drama is great. Although his poetic plays are to a large degree plays of ideas, they are primarily concerned with character and human nature. In all the poetic plays, however, characterization is weak and the philosophy detracts from the potential power of the plays. JD's greatest success came with Abraham Lincoln, a play successful not only as an experiment in dramatic structure but successful as a vivid portrait of Lincoln's soul. Its public success was assured by its topical interest at the close of World War I. Perhaps the only flaw in the play is the conclusion which diminishes the tragic effect. Oliver Cromwell is not as successful; episodes are not connected well, there is little conflict, and irrelevant scenes occur. Mary Stuart is less successful than Abraham Lincoln or Oliver Cromwell. Its one-act form is too short, the conclusion is inadequate, and its philosophic nature weakens dramatic intensity. [5]

Morris, Lloyd R. "Angels, Puritans, and Playwrights," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 2 April 1922, p. 10. Although Oliver Cromwell gives evidence of JD's fine abilities as a dramatic craftsman, the play itself is historically inaccurate and Cromwell is idealized, uncomplex, and static. [3]

Mortimer, Raymond. "A New Series," NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, V (18 Feb 1933), 193-94. JD's Shakespeare shows little
understanding of the true nature of Shakespeare's genius.

[1] Morton, David. "Drinkwater's New Play," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXXV (10 Oct 1923), 233-34. In Robert E. Lee, JD is more successful portraying a tragic picture of the South than in dramatizing the personality of Lee, who remains overly idealized. The criticisms that he speaks uncharacteristically and that the play avoids important political issues are unfounded. JD's Lee is consistent in terms of JD's dramatic world, and the political issues are of little relevance to the drama. [3]


"Drinkwater's Lincoln," BOOKMAN (NY), L (Feb 1920), 551-55. The popular success of JD's Abraham Lincoln stems primarily from the time of its writing: when patriotism is high, exemplars of human freedom and fundamental morality are especially appealing. Abraham Lincoln, who speaks to a "universal moral fervor," is a particularly suitable subject for dramatic treatment today. JD's play is notable because it conveys well the moral greatness of Lincoln's career. The play's structure, a remodeling of the chronicle play, enables JD to unify the episodes that best display Lincoln's character. The historical inaccuracies and the poor Negro dialect may be forgiven. The only real flaw is the sentimental scene between Lincoln and the Negro minister. Frank McGlynn's Lincoln was excellent. [5]

"A Great American Play by an English Dramatist," LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, CXXX (10 Jan 1930), 27, 44. The great success of JD's Abraham Lincoln stems from the simplicity of his style. [1]

"It's the Same Old Theater," BOOKMAN (NY), LXVI (Jan 1928), 576-78. JD's The Art of Theatre-going, though agreeable, is condescending. His view of the theater critic's role particularly brings this out. [2]

"Multitudes, Multitudes!" NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXIV (1 Dec 1923), 347-48. There is little evidence of poetic ability in JD's The Collected Poems of John Drinkwater. His verse is overly sentimental and contrived. [2]

Murray, J. Middleton. "Mr. Drinkwater and Mr. Davies," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXII (25 Nov 1922), 321-22. Although at present Masefield is the only poet more popular in England than JD, JD's reputation is totally undeserved, a result only of his success with Abraham Lincoln. Without the dramatic form, JD's artistry fails. His volume Preludes, 1921-1922 demonstrates the many defects in his verse. There is little control of language in his poems; his statements generally about the theme of love are "romantic and cheap," statements "made worse by an affectation . . . of superior morality." [5]

"The Muse in Council," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 9 April 1925, p. 250. JD's statements in The Muse in Council about poetic theory are ambitious, but their originality and
value is diminished because he is overly concerned with traditional and current theories. His essays on individual poets generally lack distinction and effectiveness; however, his criticism of E. A. Robinson and Lord de Tabley is timely and valuable. [3]

Nairn, J. A. "Mary Queen of Scots in Drama," FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, ns CXX (2 Aug 1926), 185-98. In his Mary Stuart, JD's conception of Mary's greatness and struggle is identical to Swinburne's, although the form of their plays is quite different. JD's play is clearly more suitable for the stage. [3]

Nathan, George Jean. "Mr. Drinkwater's Chuckle," AMERICAN MERCURY, XVII (June 1929), 249. In Bird in Hand, JD displays a humor "grounded upon a pretty fair grade of observation of life and character." Only rarely, when he remembers the box office that dictated the terms of his historical plays, do his characters lapse into "mere anticking." [3]

... "The Theatre," AMERICAN MERCURY, I (Jan 1924), 118. The English production of JD's Robert E. Lee was more successful than the American production. Few Americans can be moved by a Lee who speaks as if he were in an "English drawing-room drama." The play itself is mediocre; it presents Lee primarily as "a footlight dummy, a creature in sock and buskin placed in a series of melodramatic poses."


Nevins, Allan. "Three Dynamic Souls," BOOKMAN (NY), LXII (Dec 1925), 488-90. The Pilgrim of Eternity; Byron - A Conflict by JD is a sympathetic defense of Byron; at times, however, his defense is unconvincing. Although JD's biography might have been more illuminating, several points - especially his discussion of the effect of the success of "Childe Harold" - are original and valuable. More criticism of Byron's poetry would have improved this volume. [3]

"The New Books," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 28 Oct 1922, p. 167. JD's The Way of Poetry; An Anthology for Younger Readers has well chosen selections and good introductions. [1]

"New Books," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXIII (3 Sept 1919), 23. JD's Abraham Lincoln has great power and dignity, though idiosyncratic and historical inaccuracy detracts from the play's force. [1]

"The New Books," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXXII (11 Oct 1922), 254. The lyrics in JD's Seeds of Time, although didactic and too slow to be completely successful, achieve considerable strength. [1]


"New Books at a Glance," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXL (17 Oct 1925), 445. JD's Robert Burns is a disappointment. It is more an arrangement of Burns' lyrics than a drama about him. [1]


"New Books Reviewed," NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, CCXVIII (Sept 1923), 427-28. The poetry in JD's Preludes, 1921-1922 attempts to unify all forms of love; however, JD is too physically oriented to be called a "mystic." Rather than moral or philosophical, JD holds forth only poetic beliefs. Strong and direct, JD's verse captures well the poetic rhythm of life. [4]

"New Plays," INDEPENDENT, CI (17 Jan 1920), 86. The production of JD's Abraham Lincoln at The Cort Theatre was excellent. [1]

"New Plays and Old," BOOKMAN (NY), LIII (May 1921), 277. In Mary Stuart, JD's cold and restrained picture of Mary gives her complex character an outward simplicity. Her characterization makes the play suspenseful and moving. The modern prologue is successful because it establishes the proper psychological atmosphere. [3]

"New Poems by John Drinkwater," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 30 Aug 1925, p. 7a. JD's New Poems contains some excellent translations of German lyrics. The verse by JD, while smooth and technically sound, lacks passion and has little to say. [1]

"New Poems, FIRST POEMS and BITTER BREW," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 5 April 1925, p. 6. The verse in JD's New Poems, although lacking in imagination, is competent and craftsmanlike. Only Housman takes more care in writing than JD. [Other titles are by Edwin Muir and Cale Young Price, respectively.] [2]

Newbolt, Henry (ed). NEW PATHS ON HELICON: A COLLECTION OF MODERN POETRY, PART I (Lond: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1928), pp. 195-96. JD's prolific output of volumes of poetry has been a disadvantage to him; striking and memorable poems are difficult to locate. [2]

Nicoll, Allardyce. BRITISH DRAMA; AN HISTORICAL SURVEY FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE PRESENT TIME (Lond: George G. Harrap, 1925; rvd ed, 1932), pp. 403-5, 453, 470, 484, 489-90. JD devoted his early career to reviving the poetic play; however, despite their effectiveness he achieved his greatest success with his historical plays, particularly Abraham Lincoln. Although these plays are outwardly historical portraits, like his poetic plays they are essentially plays of ideas. Of these, Mary Stuart is the most subtle. [2]

Niven, Fredrick. "Drinkwater's Way," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 12 Aug 1922, p. 878. JD's poetry does bear the mark of a forceful temperament. His work conveys a "quiet ecstasy"; and this very quietness is the distinctive and praiseworthy quality. [2]

"No Discovery," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CLIV (10 Dec 1932), 624. The anecdotes in JD's Discovery are amusing and well told. Of greatest value are JD's memories of cricket. [1]
"Nooks and Corners," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 11 Nov 1926, p. 791. In A Book for Bookmen, JD is happily less reserved than in his drama and poetry; the result is a lively, interesting, and often valuable group of essays. [1]

Norman, Charles. "Americanism as Theme Can't Save Bad Poets," NEW YORK EVENING POST, 16 May 1931, p. 5d. JD's American Vignettes, 1860-1865 "is a bad book, a dull book, . . . an example of the growing cult of Americanism in all the arts, one that should be censured." [3]

Norman, Sylvia. "Lives of the Famous," NATION AND ATHENAEUM (Lond), XLVIII (27 Dec 1930), 438. In JD's admirable Pepys: His Life and Character, Pepys' character is well conceived; it is seen both "nobler and nastier" than usual. [1]

Norwood, Gilbert. "Plays," LONDON MERCURY, XIII (Jan 1926), 323-25. JD's Robert Burns has nothing to recommend it; the heavy use of Burns' songs provides its only appeal. [2]

"Notes," NATION (NY), CIII (28 Dec 1916), 614. JD's The Lyric is not a satisfying discussion. Although much in the volume is well reasoned and several theories successfully challenged, he draws no important conclusions about the lyric form. [2]

"Notes on Books," NOTES AND QUERIES, XI (26 Aug 1922), 178-80. In Some Contributions to the English Anthology, JD criticizes the restrictive outlook of anthologists; however, some of his examples of poetry that should be anthologized are not first-rate, dynamic poetry. Additionally, many poems that JD chooses to bring to the reader's attention as buried gems have serious poetic flaws. [2]

O., S. "An English View of the Success of Abraham Lincoln," LIVING AGE, CCCIV (27 March 1920), 790-92. The success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be attributed to the psychology of the English at the end of World War I, for in Lincoln they saw mirrored their own suffering and victory. [2]

O., S. "The Success of Abraham Lincoln," ENGLISH REVIEW, XXX (Feb 1920), 186-88. The stage success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be explained by the psychology of the British people at the time, for JD's Lincoln mirrors their recent experiences in World War I: Lincoln "seemed to incarnate our purpose, our usefulness, our sacrifice." The simple and stern tone of Abraham Lincoln is effective because it appeals to the essentially Puritan spirit of British nationalism. [4]

"Obituary Notes," PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, CXXXI (3 April 1937), 1503. [Obit of JD.] [1]

"An Old Problem," NEW STATESMAN, XXI (28 April 1923), 92. Although in JD's The Poet and Communication the writing is rich and the conclusions are logical, JD has only "very grandiloquently proved that two and two are four." [1]

"Oliver Cromwell," THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE, VI (April 1922), 171-72. The praiseworthy quality of Oliver Cromwell lies in JD's poetic conception of Cromwell's career. This conception gives the play a "dramatic ballad quality" of simplicity. [1]

"Opening Nights," INDEPENDENT, CV (2 April 1921), 329. JD's Mary Stuart at the Ritz Theater is an excellent play. [1]

"Outline of Literature," WORLD (NY), 8 July 1923, p. 19e. The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, holds the promise of an excellent three-volume series. The bibliographical references will be very helpful. [1]


P., T. M. "The Drama," BOOKMAN (Lond), LX (Aug 1921), 229-30. JD's experimentation with a loose, episodic structure in Abraham Lincoln is to be praised. The structure promotes the powerful characterization of the hero. It is one of the few recent plays which will last. [Includes a note of the performance of the play at the Lyceum Theatre.] [3]

Papajewski, Helmut. "John Drinkwater: Abraham Lincoln . . . Intention und Aufnahme" (. . . Intention and Reception), ARCHIV FÜR DAS STUDIUM DER NEUEREN SPRACHEN UND LITERATUREN, CXCV (ca. 1958), 1-19. The main reason for the favorable reception of JD's Abraham Lincoln was the play's appeal to the public's patriotic sentiments after World War I. In the early poetic plays, which could not assert themselves successfully as drama, JD was primarily concerned with overcoming the technical challenges of the dramatic form. It was only with Abraham Lincoln that JD emerged as a distinctive dramatist. The blending of verse and prose in the play enabled him to be considered truly modern, even while he cultivated his interest in the traditional elements of verse drama. Although JD occasionally slips into the generalities inherent in verse drama, his power as a dramatist compensates for it. Such inaccuracies as flawed Negro dialect may be overlooked because he succeeds so well in his purpose of drawing a forceful portrait of Lincoln, of creating a hero who, by attaining and maintaining a principle, could embody a philosophical ideal. Secondary characters in Abraham Lincoln should have been further developed. Since they do contribute to important scenes, their lack of development makes them function as primitive dramatic devices. Because the play is not a Shakespearian character tragedy, JD does not use comic relief, which would break the tension, but wisely uses feminine figures to deemphasize tension. [In German.] [5]

Parrott, T. M. "The Ablest of the Stuarts," SATURDAY REVIEW (NY), III (26 Feb 1927), 607. JD's Mr. Charles, King of England fails to accomplish its admirable aim of appraising the contributions of Charles' rule. Not only is the method of a character study unfortunate for such a purpose, but JD's claims for Charles often border on the "verge of absurdity." [4]

Paterson, Isabel. "The Last Knight in Europe," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 27 Nov 1927, p. 7. Although throughout his Oliver Cromwell, a Character Study JD seems intimidated by his subject, his outline of Cromwell's career is interesting and clear. [2]

. . . . . . "The Two Charleses," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 26 Dec 1926, p. 7. JD's Mr. Charles, King of England
is an orderly, well told narrative, though at times JD's style is turgid. [1]


Pearson, Edmund Lester. "The Outline of Literature," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXXV (12 Sept 1923), 70-72. As a reference book and as an enticement to read the classics, The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, is an excellent volume for the layman. The essays in it are concise and stimulating. The illustrations included, however, are poorly chosen. [1]

"Pepys, the Mirror of the Restoration," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 7 Dec 1930, p. 4. Although lacking in liveliness, JD's Pepys, His Life and Character is an important historical biography, one that for the first time stresses the public side of Pepys' life. [2]

Perlman, Phyllis. "London and the English Repertory Theatre," THEATRE MAGAZINE, L (July 1929), l6. The influence of repertory theaters on drama in England has been great. As shown by several of JD's plays and the history of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the repertory theater has been responsible not only for the production of many successful plays, but for the appearance of many of the greatest dramatic works in the past two decades. [4]

Perry, Bliss. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).


Phelps, William Lyon. THE ADVANCE OF ENGLISH POETRY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (NY: Dodd, Mead, 1917), pp. 148-50. Although the poetry of JD shows fine technical skill, his work lacks both inspiration and a distinctive voice. [1]

"A Play on Cromwell," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 1 Dec 1921, p. 785. The directness and simplicity of language used in JD's Oliver Cromwell retains much color and seems as appropriate for Cromwell's as for modern times. The scenes of the play are well chosen; however, the conception of Cromwell is too idealized. [4]


"Plays and Pictures," NATION AND ATHENAEUM (Lond), XLII (28 April 1928), 107. JD's Bird in Hand is an overly silly satire of Victorianism. [1]

"Pleasing Lyrics by Author of Drama on Lincoln," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 22 Dec 1919, p. 6. JD's Poems, 1908-1919 contains well executed verse; the imagery and emotion, however, lack power. [1]

"Poems for Children," SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN, 19 April 1922, p. 10. In The Way of Poetry, edited by JD, an excellent selection of good poetry for children has been made. [1]

"Poetry," ATHENAEUM (Lond), No. 4423 (3 Aug 1912), 115. JD's Poems of Love and Earth shows a growth in his craftsmanship. He is best when working in some dramatic form. Occasional clichés still detract from the quality of his work. [3]
"Poetry and Passion in Drinkwater's Mary Stuart," THEATRE MAGAZINE, XXXIII (June 1921), 401, 416. Although not as great as his Abraham Lincoln, JD's Mary Stuart is still admirable for the beauty of its scenes. The modern prologue, unfortunately, is dull and detracts greatly from the rest of the play. The production at the Ritz Theater was very good. [2]

"Poetry and Patriotism," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 10 July 1924, p. 432. Although JD's Patriotism in Literature has some interesting chapters exhibiting insight, generally the book is unsatisfactory. Comprehensively, its theme is not well handled, and irrelevant matter abounds in it. [2]

Pollen, Fox. "Abraham Lincoln; the Play, and Its Author," ARTS AND DECORATION, XII (Feb 1920), 264, 285. The great public success of JD's Abraham Lincoln can be attributed to the psychology of the English at the end of World War I. It is, nevertheless, a well constructed, moving play. The chorus, though at times awkward, occasionally achieves a fine poetic effect. JD has wisely avoided maintaining a strict fidelity to fact; however, a "cheapening" of the drama occurs when he invents nonhistorical characters. Frank McGlynn's Lincoln was very well acted. [3]

Powys, John Cowper. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

"Preludes and Pixies," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXIV (4 Nov 1922), 680. Although JD's verse often shows skill and perception, Preludes, 1921-1922, like his previous poetry, lacks inspiration. [1]

Prochilo, Michael I. "New Books Appraised," LIBRARY JOURNAL, XCI (1 Oct 1966), 4664. The Outline of Literature, edited by JD and revised by Horace Shipp (1966), is an excellent overview of world literature for the layman. [1]


R., J. J. "New Books," CATHOLIC WORLD, CXIX (July 1924), 569-70. JD's Victorian Poetry is an admirable study, done with a poet's sensitivity and insight. [1]

R., R. E. "Patriotism, Poetry and Place," NEW STATESMAN, XXIII (16 Aug 1924), 549-50. JD's Patriotism in Literature is a disappointment. JD fails to deal with the chosen subject of his book, his choice of quotations is generally poor, and he shows no evidence of original thought. The chapter about patriotic feelings being inspired by love of place has some value, but here also the logic of JD's argument is faulty. [4]
R., S. "Cromwell in the Haymarket," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXCVI (2 June 1923), 726-27. Both Abraham Lincoln and Oliver Cromwell by JD avoid the pitfall of melodrama; Oliver Cromwell, however, is the better play. But it seems as if the historical drama in JD's hands, as in the hands of almost all who attempt that genre, keeps the issues behind individual action from emerging forcefully. The production at His Majesty's Theatre was generally good. [3]


"The Real Pepys," NEW STATESMAN, XXXVI (29 Nov 1930), 246. For the first time, and with great skill and insight, JD, in Pepys: His Life and Character, synthesizes the historical Pepys and Pepys the diarist. [2]

"Recent Books," TIME, XXX (13 Sept 1937), 63. JD's Robinson of England is extremely dull. [1]

"Recent Books in Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LV (March 1922), 76. The sketches in JD's Cotswold Characters are stylistically admirable. [1]

"Recent Books in Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LVII (July 1923), 566. Although some of the poetry in JD's Preludes, 1921-1922 is uninspired, the verse is generally more mature than his earlier work. [1]

"Recent Books in Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LIX (March 1924), 87. The Outline of Literature, Vol. 2, edited by JD, has some excellent chapters as well as valuable illustrations. [1]

"Recent Books in Brief Review," BOOKMAN (NY), LIX (May 1924), 356. JD shows great insight in his Victorian Poetry; his discussion of Victorian diction especially is outstanding. [1]

"Recent Poems," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXI (12 Oct 1918), 392-93. JD's verse in Poems, 1908-1914 shows dignity and seriousness. [1]

Redfern, James. "The Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CLXIII (1 Sept 1944), 195. The current production of JD's Bird in Hand at St. Martin's Theatre demonstrates the continued force of what is probably JD's best play. [2]

Reid, Foster. "Seventy Years Age," NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, III (25 June 1932), 832. Unfortunately, The Eighteen-sixties; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, edited by JD, includes no essays on important periodicals or on the appearance of illustrated gift books. Still, the essays are of superior quality. [2]

Reid, Louis R. "Abraham Lincoln: Drinkwater's Play a Great Adventure in the Theatre," DRAMATIC MIRROR, LXXI (Jan 1920), 2023. JD's Abraham Lincoln, which breaks new ground in dramatic technique, was performed exceptionally well at the Cort Theatre, 15 Dec 1919. [1]

Riding, Laura and Robert Graves. A SURVEY OF MODERNIST POETRY (Lond: Heinemann, 1927), pp. 100, 111-12. It is historically true that the "plain reader trying to keep up with the poetry of his time will be more likely to choose a poet such as the American Carl Sandberg or the English John Drinkwater, belonging to a dead movement which has reached its limit and will expire with the death of its authors, than one belonging to a live movement (such as E. E. Cummings or John Crow Ransom) which asks him to risk his critical judgement." Poetry such as JD's "The Fires of God" is "tame," "dull," and "false." The result of such poetry, which takes the reader nowhere, has been to diminish the importance of poetry in general for the common reader. However, poets like Marianne Moore, whose poetry is ironically critical of poetry such as JD's - and who assume that the reader "is willing to part with the decayed flesh of poetry, the deteriorated sentimental part, and to confine himself to the hard, matter-of-fact skeleton of poetic logic" - have a sparse following of readers because their technical innovations demand a critical effort that most readers refuse to make. [1]


Roeder, Alois Wilhelm. JOHN DRINKWATER ALS DRAMATIKER (John Drinkwater as Dramatist) (Giessen: Univ of Giessen P, 1927). Although JD has always blended poetry and drama well, a unified, distinctive art form is not evident in his early poetic plays. Abraham Lincoln marks an important stylistic advancement in JD's development as a dramatic craftsman: by choosing a hero whose character creates action, JD is able to use very open exposition without losing unity. Oliver Cromwell, Robert E. Lee, and Mary Stuart also make use of open forms effectively. Robert Burns does not come up to the standard of Abraham Lincoln. JD's understanding of the stage enabled him to create strong plays without relying on stage gimmickry. [In German.] [Reviewed by Karl Arns in DIE NEUEREN SPRACHEN, XXXVII (1929), 163; by Florian Ansanger in LITERATURBLATT


Ropes, Arthur R. "History and Drinkwater," CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, CXIX (May 1926), 613-20. The chief fault accounting for the lack of success of JD's Oliver Cromwell, Robert E. Lee, and Mary Stuart is the dramatist's method of developing plays from a theory and not from a dramatic conception of living men. Abraham Lincoln met with great popular success; however, it is likely that JD's theory of historical drama developed only after that play. JD's conception of Cromwell is clearly mistaken. In order to support his theory, JD wrongly makes him a "revolutionist" and ignores many important aspects of Cromwell's character. In Robert E. Lee, JD's portrait of Lee's personality is accurate; however, a true understanding of the man would have revealed that Lee's career was unsuitable for dramatic treatment. Of the three moments in Lee's career most useful to a dramatist, JD uses only one. JD's depiction of Mary Stuart is faulty because her true personality and the facts of her career do not match the conception of the particular woman he wanted for his play. Because he works "backwards," history encumbers rather than assists JD. Mary Stuart is additionally hampered by "the most perverse of prologues."

Rothenstein, William. TWENTY-FOUR PORTRAITS, WITH CRITICAL APPRECIATIONS BY VARIOUS HANDS (Lond: George Allen & Unwin, 1920), n.p. [Contains a tribute to JD and a portrait of him done in 1917 by Rothenstein.] [2]

"A Royal Ironist," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XL (4 Dec 1926), 342. A well balanced and judicious portrait, JD's Mr. Charles, King of England corrects the common political estimation of Charles. But although Charles emerges in a much better light, his true faults are never ignored. [2]

S. "Mr. Masefield and Mr. Drinkwater," ATHENAEUM (Lond), pt. 1 (18 April 1919), 214-15. The topical interest of some of the scenes constitutes the primary appeal of JD's Abraham Lincoln. The lack of plot and probing characterization, the choruses, and the sentimentality of the play make it second-rate. In his production of the play, however, JD has succeeded in minimizing these faults and has achieved a deserved stage success. [3]

S., J. C. "Poetry," LONDON MERCURY, V (March 1922), 540-41. Although JD's Seeds of Time is his best volume of poetry to date, the "artificiality and rhetoric" of his verse is still a problem. [2]

S., J. E. "The Victorians Again," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLIX (2 May 1932), 19. [A commentary on the uneveness of the essays collected in The Eighteen-sixties: Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, edited by JD. No mention of JD.] [1]

S., J. J. "Poetic Drama," GRINNELL REVIEW, XVI (June 1921), 451-62. JD was probably influenced by the poetic drama of Stephen Phillips. With "infinite understanding" JD resolves the conflict in Mary Stuart. [3]

S., L. E. "John Drinkwater Appraises the Great Diarist," BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, 31 Dec 1930, p. 2. In addition to
presenting an excellent portrait of Pepys the diarist and Pepys the man, JD's Pepys: His Life and Character gives an interesting account of eighteenth-century history. [1]

Sachar, A. L. "Versatile Fox," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 2 Dec 1928, p. 28. JD's Charles James Fox, like Mr. Charles, King of England, is far below the quality of his earlier work. Rarely does the biography go beyond a "bald recital of events."

Sackville-West, V. "Three Plays," NATION AND ATHENÆUM (Lond), XXXIII (21 July 1923), 521. JD's Robert E. Lee, like his other historical plays, is largely formless and his characters, especially women, are "mere marionettes with no life or character of their own." However, given the artistically uncritical and undemanding temperament of modern audiences, JD's plays are perhaps suitable in effecting a "marriage between the drama and the cinema." [4]

Saintsbury, George. "The Reader," BOOKMAN (Lond), XLIV (June 1913), 113-16. Apart from the overly serious defense which JD provides for several attacks on Swinburne, the chief flaw in his Swinburne, an otherwise good appreciation of the artist, is the "measles of fashionable jargon." [3]

Salpeter, Harry. "Dusting Pedestals," WORLD (NY), 5 Dec 1926, p. 10m. JD's attempt at raising the low historical reputation of King Charles II is admirable; however, Mr. Charles, King of England is unnecessarily dull, and often JD makes the portrait false by depreciating the importance of Charles' great faults. [3]

"A Sane Historian," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXXVII (4 Dec 1926), 1036, 1039. In Mr. Charles, King of England, JD's central thesis concerns Charles' early experiences as they influenced his later character. Although not remarkable for its insight, the volume is admirable as an interesting historical narrative. [2]


Schneider, Isidor. "Miniatures, R. A.," NEW REPUBLIC, LXXVII (20 Dec 1933), 174-75. The essays in JD's Shakespeare are lively. [1]

Scott, Dixon. "A New Morris," BOOKMAN (Lond), XLII (Sept 1912), 264-66. Although JD's William Morris: A Critical Study presents the best defense of Morris to date, JD's attempt to prove that each of Morris' works denotes an increase in artistic power often leads him to exaggerated claims. JD's discussion of "The Defence of Guenevere" and "The Life and Death of Jason" particularly bear this out. The profound understanding of human nature attributed to Morris is also exaggerated. [4]

"Seen on the Stage," VOGUE, LXXIII (8 June 1929), 104, 106. The humor and dialogue in JD's farce Bird in Hand is fresh and entertaining; the last act, however, lags. [1]

"Shakespeare," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 16 Feb 1933, p. 104. Made important by his practical experience in the theatre, JD's Shakespeare is a lively and interesting consideration of Shakespeare's life and work. [1]
Shane, Leslie. "Mid-Victorian," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CLIII (11 June 1932), 593. The Eighteen-sixties: Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, edited by JD, is excellent. JD's essay on Aeneas Sweetland Dallas and Sir John Fortescue's essay on George White Melville are the best in the volume. "This volume would be better named Literature in the Eighteen Sixties by modern literateurs, for the only exception is an account of the Science of the period by Sir Oliver Lodge." [2]

Shanks, Edward. "The Drama: Robert E. Lee," OUTLOOK (Lond), LI (30 June 1923), 538. As in Abraham Lincoln, Mary Stuart, and Oliver Cromwell, JD's conception of his hero in Robert E. Lee is historically inaccurate because it is not realistic. Often, the presentation of his heroes, though dramatically effective, is "very cheap and theatrical." The moving theme and the effective handling of plot in Robert E. Lee, however, make the play satisfactory on stage. [Includes comments on the production of Robert E. Lee at the Regent Theatre.] [3]

"A Shelf of Anthologies," POETRY, XXXVII (Dec 1930), 164-71. Although up-to-date, Twentieth-century Poetry, the English section edited by JD, will offend many with its "bromidic, suspicious, and often erroneous" notes. [3]


Sherry, Laura. "Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright," POETRY, XIX (Nov 1921), 94-99. Many passages in JD's works show his true poetic genius. However, these passages are endangered by a preponderance of merely adequate writing; "when he summons his naked truth and meets it face to face one feels that he is inadequate." [Review of Pawns; Four Poetic Plays, Mary Stuart, and Poems, 1908-1919.] [5]


"Shorter Notices," CATHOLIC WORLD, CXXXVII (Aug 1933), 638-39. JD's This Troubled World, though initially strong, provides overly simple and optimistic solutions to many issues; the argument for the sustaining power of art is especially weak. [2]

"Shorter Notices," NATION (NY), CXXXVII (30 Aug 1933), 248. JD's Shakespeare is more successful as a defense of Shakespeare's authorship of the plays than as a biography. [1]

"Shorter Notices," NEW STATESMAN, XXVIII (5 Feb 1927), 514. JD's A Book for Bookmen resurrects some valuable, but forgotten poets and poetry. [1]

"Shorter Notices," NEW STATESMAN, XXIX (9 July 1927), 422. The title of JD's The Gentle Art of Theatre-going is poor, as is the lack of separate chapters. The discussion of the drama, however, is interesting. [1]

Sibley, Carroll. BARRIE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES: CAMEO PORTRAITS OF TEN LIVING AUTHORS (Webster Groves, MO: International Mark Twain Society, 1936), pp. 31-37. Because of the fast pace and diversity of interests in modern literature, JD is not very optimistic about his efforts enduring. Nevertheless, his output has been tremendous considering its quality and compares well with the work of any living author. Showing equal skill as a poet, dramatist, and biographer, JD overlooks no details necessary for the most complete account of his subject. Any lack of popular acclaim met by his works may be attributed to the high standards he has set for himself. Lascelles Abercrombie has thus pointed out that A Man's House suffered on stage because of the difficulty of finding an actor capable of playing the leading role. American response to Abraham Lincoln was initially anticipated to be negative because of its lack of love interest; it was, nevertheless, a great stage hit in America. [Includes some conversation between Sibley and JD at JD's home one afternoon and brief biographical information.] [3]

Siegrist, Mary. "O! Synge Untoe Mie Roundelaie," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 22 April 1922, p. 7. Although the themes of the poems in JD's Preludes, 1921-1922 are sometimes worn, the poetry generally shows his religious attitude towards art and his ability to combine "instinct with beauty." [2]

"Simplicity," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 9 Nov 1922, p. 722. JD demonstrates little skill in achieving with simplicity the poetic power required for his themes in Preludes, 1921-1922. His rhythms and visual images have simplicity, but instead of conveying a raw vitality they remain dull. [4]


Skinner, Richard Dana. "The Play," COMMONWEAL, X (15 May 1929), 50. Although the cast of Bird in Hand, directed by JD, is excellent, JD's play becomes boring because it is repetitious. "A big blue pencil might have turned this long-drawn-out affair into a gem of brief delight." [3]


Smith Jr., Beverly W. "Drinkwater's Book for Bookmen," NEW YORK EVENING POST, 2 July 1927, p. 8. The essays in JD's A Book for Bookmen are both interesting and important. [1]

"Some Books of the Week," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXLII (15 Sept 1928), 332. JD's All About Me is admirably suited for children. [1]

"Some Drama," NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY NEW TECHNICAL BOOKS, XXII (16 Aug 1919), 881. JD's Abraham Lincoln proves that only an American could do justice to a drama about Lincoln, dependent as it must be on an accurate setting and idiom. JD's play is commendable only for its noble sentiment. [1]

"Some Modern Plays," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 28 June 1923, pp. 429-30. With clear, direct dialogue and expert craftsmanship, JD fulfills the artistic demands made by
Robert E. Lee. Those who see JD as a playwright writing by formula must at least concede that he performs his task with beauty in this play. [2]

"Some Modern Plays," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 24 Dec 1925, p. 894. Occasionally, in such plays as X=O, A Night of the Trojan War, poetry and emotion are not unduly suppressed by JD's artistic restraint. Too often, however, JD's well constructed plays lack emotional warmth because he concentrates on artifice to the exclusion of "emotions felt, aspirations shared, truth revealed." [Review of Collected Plays and Robert Burns.] [3]

"Some Pre-war Poems," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXV (2 Feb 1918), 96. JD's verse has much grace and often gives a pleasing sense of lyrical beauty; however, self-consciousness is generally more evident than real inspiration, and his tone, therefore, often seems affected. [2]

"Some Recent Books of Poetry," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 16 June 1913, p. 284. JD's Poems, 1908-1914 is a notable achievement and proves his poetic powers to be mature. [1]


Spiller, Robert E. "Book Reviews," SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARTERLY, XXIII (Jan 1924), 81-83. If the chronicle play ever returns as an important dramatic structure, JD will be responsible for its reappearance. Such a possibility, however, seems unlikely, for the appeal of the chronicle play is not so much artistic as it is nationalistic. Although JD's Robert E. Lee is artistically polished - having moving and poetic prose, "a dramatic unity, a firmness of outline, a completeness of structure" - its form will probably not add much to modern dramatic technique. [4]

Squire, John Collings. "A Better Play Than Usual," BOOKS IN GENERAL BY SOLOMON EAGLE, THIRD SERIES (Lond: Heinemann, 1921; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1971), pp. 199-205; rptd from NEW STATESMAN [not seen.] Although JD's Abraham Lincoln is flawed by "all sorts of defects in characterisation, interpretation, machinery," it is still very moving. The play is reminiscent of Hardy's THE DYNASTS in its structure and its use of the chorus, though Hardy's choruses were far superior. [2]

Squire, J. C. "Poetry," LONDON MERCURY, V (March 1922), 540-41. Although JD's Seeds of Time is his best volume of poetry to date, the "artificiality and rhetoric" of his verse is still a problem. [1]

Stevenson, Burton E. "Some Poets Survey the Universe," LITERARY DIGEST INTERNATIONAL BOOK REVIEW, III (Sept 1925), 558-60. The verse in JD's New Poems is both mechanical and shallow; it has the flavor of "determined prettiness." [1]

Stidger, Wm. L. "Abraham Lincoln - A Drama by John Drinkwater: Dramatic Book Sermon," HOMILETIC REVIEW, XCI (Feb 1926), 139-42. Although JD's Abraham Lincoln is technically flawed and historically inaccurate, it is spiritually
moving and inspirational. [An effusive appreciation of the "great spiritual moments" of Abraham Lincoln.]

Stuart, Henry Logan. "History of Literature," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 27 Oct 1923, p. 187. In The Outline of Literature, Vol. I, edited by JD, the best chapter is that on the Bible as literature. Generally, the volume is informative and well written. It will be an excellent guide for the layman. [1]

"Literary History," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 12 April 1924, p. 660. JD's The Outline of Literature, Vol. II is not as satisfactory as the first volume. The scope of the book is not sufficient because the consideration of non-British literature is inadequate. Few of the articles are signed, and the anonymity can become offensive when, as happens in several of the articles, highly disputable statements are made. [3]

"A Study of Fox," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 11 Oct 1928, p. 721. It is regrettable that JD's Charles James Fox is not the definitive biography of Fox. What keeps it from reaching its potential is JD's lack of objectivity and his "idolatry which excuses everything done by Fox." [4]

Sturgeon, Mary C. STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY POETS (Lond: George G. Harrap, 1920; rptd Port Washington, NY; Lond: Kennikat P, 1970), pp. 327-46. The early verse of JD failed because it was too polished in form to be striking in content; it was "undistinguished perfection." For this reason JD has been commonly considered "not a contemporary poet." The strength of JD's verse, however, is in its rationality and respect for form and poetic decorum. Additionally, the Puritan spirit of his temperament gives rise to the noticeably British flavor which marks his poetry. This Puritan spirit is evident in Cromwell, and Other Poems, a volume that shows how JD is able to vary rhythm and rhyme. The Puritan - direct, rational, and unsubtle - is also seen in JD's best dramatic effort, The Storm. Although this poetic play is occasionally flawed by overdone rhetoric, it conveys well a spiritual struggle with power. [4]

Sutton, Graham. "A Henry for an Oliver," BOOKMAN (Lond), LXIV (July 1923), 215. In the performance of JD's Oliver Cromwell at His Majesty's Theatre, Henry Ainley's Cromwell was too theatrical, though the performance generally was sound. [1]
theatrically idealizing its hero, shows a fundamental error in conception. [5]

"Swinburne," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 6 July 1913, p. 388.
In Swinburne: An Estimate, JD proves himself to be a perceptive critic. His analysis of Swinburne's philosophy and dramatic works is very good; his discussion of technique and style, though insightful, is incomplete. [4]

"Swinburne: An Estimate," NATION (NY), XC VII (27 Nov 1913), 510-11. Unlike his "hotly panegyrical" William Morris, a Critical Study, JD's Swinburne: An Estimate is a well balanced piece of criticism. However, JD's "ardent aesthetic criticism" examines already well covered and now unimportant ground. Additionally, his argument that Swinburne's art is a remarkable illustration of the English spirit is disputable and not wholly relevant. For an important examination of the development of Swinburne's ideas and his historical significance, JD's critical interests and abilities are insufficient. [4]

"Swinburne: An Estimate," SPECTATOR (Lond), CX (24 May 1913), 889. Although not important enough a criticism to justify its length, JD's Swinburne: An Estimate shows some remarkable insight. [1]

Swinnerton, Frank. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

T., E. G. "Concerning Mr. Drinkwater," REVIEWER, I (15 April 1921), 144-45. [Briefly recounts E. G. T.'s meeting with JD when the latter was in Richmond, Virginia, immediately prior to his writing of Robert E. Lee.] [3]

T., R. "Mr. Pepys," BOOKMAN (Lond), LXXIX (Dec 1930), 198. Although JD's Pepys, His Life and Character balances well Pepys' private and official life, the book is "pedestrian" and lacks a completely accurate historical perspective. [2]


Tarn. "Mr. Drinkwater's Mary Stuart," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXVI (30 April 1921), 561-62. JD's Mary Stuart is little more than a "trifle" because the brevity of the play makes the characterization slight. [1]

Tarn. "Mr. Drinkwater's Oliver Cromwell," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXVII (10 Dec 1921), 788. In Oliver Cromwell, JD has developed considerably his ability to write dialogue in an effective idiom. The fourth scene particularly shows JD's genius for staging. His conception of Cromwell, however, is too idealistic. Because he has diminished Cromwell's real vitality, the vitality of the play is decreased. [3]

Tarn. "Oliver Cromwell at His Majesty's Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXX (9 June 1923), 966. JD's Oliver Cromwell, though scholarly and appropriately restrained, is monotonous. The music and poetry of the play serve no central artistic function; they add only "local and temporary colour." The play lacks dramatic intensity and the character of Cromwell is too bland. [2]

Tarn. "The Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXX (30 June 1923), 1082. JD's Robert E. Lee is an admirable play. Though tactful, it is still lively; rarely does the play descend
to the trivial. The production of the drama at the Regent Theatre was very good, the performances by Claude Rains and Felix Alymer especially noteworthy. [2]

The production of JD's Pawns: Four Poetic Plays will be well suited only to mature actors and audience. [1]

Although JD's Robert E. Lee does not do full justice to Lee's career, and although several speeches in the play are of poor quality, the play moves adequately to its spiritual climax. [1]

Although at times dull, JD's Discovery is generally an interesting and honest narrative of JD's early life. [1]

"Theatre-going," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 7 July 1927, p. 467.
The value of JD's The Gentle Art of Theatre-going stems from his commitment to and experiences in the theatre. His view of the audience's aesthetic intelligence, however, seems unduly severe. [3]

Thomas, Edward. "Two Poets," BOOKMAN (Lond), XLVI (July 1914), 177. JD's Cromwell and Other Poems is his best volume to date. He handles his subjects with a "perfectly appropriate exuberance of speech." [1]


Thouless, Priscilla. "Wilfred Wilson Gibson and John Drinkwater," MODERN POETIC DRAMA (Oxford: Blackwell, 1934; rptd Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1968), pp. 52-65. Like Lascelles Abercrombie and Wilfred Gibson, JD is associated with poetic drama which uses realistic, not romantic, subjects and language. JD's first poetic play, Cophetua, had a very sentimental subject and its rhythm was dramatically ineffective. The blank verse of Rebellion is more suitable and the play is generally well written; however, JD's inability to use visual imagery mars the quality of his achievement. The Storm also exemplifies JD's inability to think in images; additionally, the play's meditative structure and language are dramatic flaws. More fitting for JD's "essentially pedestrian," imprecise, and unobjective mind are The God of Quiet and X=O, A Night of the Trojan War, which resemble morality plays. JD's historical plays are of little literary merit, being both historically and artistically weak. [5]


"Towards the English Anthology," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 13 July 1922, p. 457. In Some Contributions to the English Anthology, JD explains well the reasons behind the inadequate representation of minor poets, particularly seventeenth century poets, in anthologies. With great "accuracy of taste," he presents examples of many very fine but long ignored poems in order to underscore the lack of comprehensiveness in existing poetry anthologies. [1]

Towse, J. Ranken. "'Bobbie' Burns as Hero of New Drinkwater Play," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 5 Dec 1925,
p. 2. It is more accurate to define JD's Robert Burns as a "musical comedy" than a play. The dialogue and the lively, admirable portrayal of Burns' character, however, compensate for the weaknesses inherent in the type of drama JD has written. [2]

"Drinkwater's Cromwell," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 3 Dec 1921, p. 221. JD's Oliver Cromwell is not a successful dramatic work. Like Abraham Lincoln, Oliver Cromwell portrays only the high points of its hero's long career. But while public knowledge and near worship of Lincoln insured the popular success of the former play, despite its flawed construction, the "disconnected episodes" of the latter play are not likely to be bridged by an audience whose present interest in Cromwell as a hero is slight. JD's neglect of Cromwell as an active politician further weakens the dramatic possibilities of his idealistic portrait of a man. [4]

"Trade in Brains," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXIII (26 Nov 1919), 346-47. JD's Abraham Lincoln is "a notable presentation of the ideals for which Lincoln died." It is hoped that the upcoming revised version for production in America will "meet the more critical knowledge of the theme" which the new audience will have. [Includes a portrait of JD.] [1]

"Transition," NEWSWEEK, IX (3 April 1937), 25. [Obit of JD.] [1]

"A Triangle of Poets," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXIII (3 Dec 1919), 424-25. The verse in JD's Poems, 1908-1919 demonstrates the traditional forms and emotional restraint do not destroy poetic power. [1]

Trilling, Lionel. "The British Sixties," NATION (NY), CXXXV (28 Sept 1932), 285. JD's essay on Aeneas Sweetland Dallas is one of the two best studies in The Eighteen-sixties; Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, edited by JD. [2]

Turner, W. J. "Chronicles. Drama," LONDON MERCURY, VII (Nov 1922), 85-87. The stated theme of JD's Mary Stuart, unfortunately, is not developed in the play. Rather than a great and tragic lover, Mary Stuart is depicted in JD's play as a "miserable, paltry creature, eaten up with vanity, and . . . preposterously self-centered." As a result, the play seems like a long "footnote to a prologue." [1]

"The Theatre," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXIX (30 Sept 1922), 432. Although JD's stagecraft and the acting in his Mary Stuart are generally good, the play itself fails because of the pervasiveness of his "fundamental vice of grandiloquence." [3]

"Two Plays," SATURDAY REVIEW (Lond), CXXXI (18 June 1921), 505. In Mary Stuart, JD captures neither the lusty woman of John Knox's play nor the poetic queen of Swinburne's. JD's Mary is "but half a wanton, and half an excuse." [2]

"Two Poets," TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT (Lond), 15 Dec 1921, p. 838. The primary qualities of JD's inspiration have always been moral; however, in Seeds of Time the lack of musicality in his verse is not compensated for by polished technique as it had been before. The result is poetry with an unfortunate air of overconfidence. [4]

little "precious metal" and much "shining gravel." The verse is too decorous and didactic. [3]


"Verse and Verse-makers," AMERICAN REVIEW OF REVIEWS, LIV (Dec 1916), 674-76. JD's The Lyric is a fine analysis of what constitutes perfection in lyric poetry. [1]

"Verse for Children," NATION AND ATHENAEUM (Lond), XLVI (7 Dec 1929), 382 supp. JD's More About Me is "uneven," and several poems will not appeal to children. [1]

"Victorian Poetry," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 17 May 1924, p. 764. JD's analysis of the diction and material of Victorian poetry is clear-minded; however, his conclusions are generally implicit and many of his generalizations lack proper qualification. Unfortunately, JD discounts the individual mark of certain poets, but his overemphasis of the importance of his favorites adds vitality to Victorian Poetry. [3]

Vines, Sherard. MOVEMENTS IN MODERN ENGLISH POETRY AND PROSE (Lond: H. Milford and Oxford UP; Tokyo: Ohkayama Publishing, 1929), pp. 2, 16, 21-26, 28, 34, 46, 64, 75, 97, 341, 345. The verse of both JD and Lascelles Abercrombie is characterized by a "heavy prolixity." But whereas Abercrombie's attempt to use primarily Anglo-Saxon words occasionally results in vivid, rugged beauty, "the dull oppression of the English Midlands has more permanently entered" into JD's poetry. "Drinkwater's diction is a compromise between the stark Saxon and the ennobled 'Poetic.'" The result is verse remarkable for its ingenuity and vocabulary but lacking in sincerity and vision. [4]

W., L. "Mr. Drinkwater's Difficulty," NATION AND ATHENAEUM (Lond), XXXIII (9 June 1923), 342-43. The central problem for JD in Oliver Cromwell is that the dramatic impact of Cromwell on stage, great as it is for Englishmen inherently, is destroyed when the character must speak. JD's play continually loses force because he is unable to solve this problem. [3]

Wallace, Margaret. "Mr. Drinkwater Rescues a Man from Himself," NEW YORK EVENING POST, 22 Nov 1920, p. 5d. JD's interpretation of Pepys' life reveals the diarist as a far more consequential man than has been previously seen. JD's emphasis on Pepys' public life, particularly, is a valuable contribution. [Review of Pepys: His Life and Character.] [2]

"New Anthology Parades This Century's Fads," NEW YORK EVENING POST LITERARY REVIEW, 21 Dec 1929, p. 13m. Although Twentieth Century Poetry, edited by JD, Henry Canby, and William Rose Benét, preserves some excellent and not familiar poetry, its editors' process of selection is questionable. Some of the poetry does not merit inclusion; much of it is experimental, making the anthology "a sort of poetic fashion show." [2]

"Pepys: His Life and Character," BOOKMAN (NY), LXXII (Dec 1930), 424-25. JD's critical portrait of Pepys in Pepys: His Life and Character is insightful. His treatment of Pepys' marriage is original and his interest
in Pepys the public servant is welcome. [2]

Walton, Eda Lou. "Loyalty to His Own Family," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 15 Nov 1931, p. 4. Although lacking vivid intensity, JD's Inheritance relates his early history well and gives a notable picture of two-hundred years of British cultural history. [2]

"The Poet's Life Up to His Thirtieth Year," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 9 April 1933, p. 6. JD's Discovery narrates with great restraint and honesty his life to age thirty. [2]

Waugh, Arthur. "Inheritance," ENGLISH REVIEW, LIII (Dec 1931), 858-59. JD's Inheritance is an excellent autobiography, depicting well the spirit of JD's age. "The details are not overdone, the grouping is skilfull, the general picture is orderly, serene, and inviting." [2]

Wearing, J. P. (ed). THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF SIR ARTHUR PINERO (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota P, 1974), pp. 267, 275-76, 288-90. [Includes seven very brief letters from Pinero to JD, covering the years, 1917-1932. Other than invitations and general best wishes, Pinero simply wishes JD well with his plays and indicates that JD's Inheritance was pleasurable reading.] [1]

Wheelock, John Hall. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).


"Pepys for Pepysians," NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE BOOKS, 23 Nov 1930, p. 6. JD's Pepys: His Life and Character is the first balanced portrait of Pepys the diarist and Pepys the public servant. This general conception is admirable. However, not only does JD do little to synthesize the two aspects of Pepys' character, but the book will seem dull except to the avid Pepysian. [3]

Wiggin, Kate Douglas. "Kate Douglas Wiggin Sees Abraham Lincoln in London," OUTLOOK (NY), CXXIII (24 Dec 1919), 537-38. When produced, JD's Abraham Lincoln becomes far more powerful and forceful than a reading of the play might suggest. [2]

Wild, Friedrich. "John Drinkwater," ENGLISCHE STUDIEN, LVII (1923), 447-55. Although JD demonstrates artistic strength in his early lyric poetry, Abraham Lincoln is his first really notable work. The innovative structure of this historical play establishes it as a distinctive type of drama. Its popular success can be explained by the time of its writing, when the ideal of freedom of the American Civil War had great attraction. [In German.] [3]

Wilkinson, Marguerite. "Abraham Lincoln and John Drinkwater," TOUCHSTONE, VI (Feb 1920), 269-75. In JD's Abraham Lincoln, Americans will probably object to the lack of local color, the mishandled Negro idiom, the emphasis on the English cast of Lincoln's temperament, and the lack of humor. However, JD's drama admirably conveys Lincoln's idealism and "moral stamina." [Includes a brief interview with JD in which he comments on the audience's natural appreciation of dramatic quality, his reasons for dramatizing Lincoln as he did, and the critical reception of Abraham Lincoln.] [4]
... "Some Recent Books of Verse," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 23 Nov 1919, p. 680. Although the verse in JD's Poems, 1908-1919 seems at times too remote and conventional, it expresses with restraint and simplicity and nature of the English spirit. [3]

"William Morris: A Critical Study," NATION (NY), XCVI (13 Feb 1913), 155-56. JD's volume on Morris is not a critical study; rather, it is a "passionate tribute." Although in William Morris: a Critical Study JD avoids critical comparisons between Morris and other poets, he ranks him with the greatest artists in history and above his nineteenth-century peers. As a work of criticism examining Morris' poetry and importance, JD's book is weak in comparison to Alfred Noyes' excellent WILLIAM MORRIS (1908). [3]

Williams, Ben Ames. See MARK TWAIN QUARTERLY: DRINKWATER MEMORIAL NUMBER, 1 (Summer 1937).

Williams, Harold. MODERN ENGLISH WRITERS: BEING A STUDY OF IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE, 1890-1914 (Lond: Sedgwick & Jackson, 1918), pp. 131-33. JD's first two volumes of poetry, Poems (1903) and The Death of Leander and Other Poems (1906), lack any sort of artistic merit. His subsequent volumes, however, show a growth in both thought and expression. The traditional forms, "restrained gravity and moral earnestness" of his verse are often handled well and compensate for a lack of imagination. [4]

Williams-Ellis, A. "Poets and Poetry," SPECTATOR (Lond), CXXVII (10 Dec 1921), 791-92. JD can hardly be termed a poet because "he is not an independent, self-instigated 'maker.'" Although the verse in Seeds of Time has charm, there is no distinctive poetic voice nor much evidence of true inspiration. [2]

Wilson, Jr., Edmund. "After the Play," NEW REPUBLIC, XXVI (6 April 1921), 162. For several reasons, JD's Mary Stuart does not achieve its potentially great effect. The modern prologue and conclusion are awkward, merely mechanical, and irrelevant to the theme of the play. As in Abraham Lincoln, this play shows JD's ability as a craftsman in dramatizing ideas; however, his dramatic imagination is weak, and the play is unable to attain a life of its own. In Mary Stuart, by explaining the central conflict as well as Mary's character at the beginning. JD makes the conclusion ineffective, for there is no "moral climax" to the action. Clare Eames' Mary was acted very well. [4]

Wilson, P. W. "John Drinkwater Portrays Charles James Fox," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 28 Oct 1928, p. 8. Unlike his historical plays, JD's Charles James Fox is a disappointment. Not only is his narrative of historical fact often biased, but his style occasionally lacks the vividness necessary to recreate accurately the struggles which he discusses. [4]

... "John Drinkwater's Homage to England," NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, 19 Sept 1937, pp. 9, 24. Charming and entertaining, JD's Robinson of England describes as insular the essential philosophy of the English: "The book cannot be wholly excluded, therefore, from the rapidly accumulating library of nationalistic commonplace."
Unintentionally, JD's attitude in the book characterizes the "comforting anesthetic" which the English use to avoid facing the complexities of the modern world. [4]

Wolfe, Humbert. "Mr. Drinkwater Grows Up," OBSERVER (Lond), 9 Oct 1932, n.p. The prose of JD's Discovery demonstrates the same refined manners and the natural style felt in all of JD's work. [1]

Summer and Winter Harvest," OBSERVER (Lond), 17 Dec 1933, n.p. In Summer Harvest: Poems, 1924-1933, JD has captured many of his interesting encounters in admirable verse. [1]

Wood, Fredrick T. "On the Poetry of John Drinkwater," POETRY REVIEW, XXIV (Jan-Feb 1933), 27-51. It is undeniable that JD has produced a good deal of poor poetry, especially in his early volumes when his verse was primarily derivative. However, Lyrical and Other Poems (1908) marked the beginning of JD's distinctive voice and style, and now, beside William Watson, "he is probably the most individual of modern poets." The two greatest influences in JD's works are his puritanism and his love of Warwickshire. In his nature poetry, unlike in his love poems, JD's restrained passion becomes an asset. His temperament might be characterized as a blend of Shaw's mind and Galsworthy's emotions. [5]

Woolf, Leonard. "From Moses to Wellington," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XLIV (20 Oct 1928), 110. As a biography, JD's Charles James Fox is generally very good. His portrait is lively and captures the personality of Fox well. JD's tendency, however, is to overlook, or weakly excuse, many faults in Fox's character. [3]

"Modern Poetry," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXVII (18 April 1925), 76. Much of JD's criticism in The Muse in Council is worthwhile; however, he overstates his case for adhering to tradition and becomes dogmatic to the point of writing "a priori nonsense." [4]

"Patriotism and Literature," NATION AND ATHENAEUM, XXXV (7 June 1924), 322. JD's Patriotism in Literature is disappointing; however, the fault lies primarily in the nature of patriotic literature, which is generally second-rate. The fact that no example of patriotic literature in the volume has literary value seems responsible for JD's inappropriate inclusion of selections which actually have no relation to his proposed topic. [4]


Y., S. "Five Books of Plays," NEW REPUBLIC, XXX (15 March 1922), 83-84. Although JD's Oliver Cromwell bears little relation either to the Cromwell of history or to the atmosphere of the time, the play is a notable technical achievement, making out of its materials a "dramatic ballad of noble living elements." [2]