

**E. J. Clery, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven: Poetry, Protest and Economic Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 308. £75. ISBN 9781107189225.**

E. J. Clery's passionate and well-researched study on *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* is the work that Anna Barbauld's long neglected 334-line poem deserves. Efforts initiated by her niece Lucy Aikin long perpetuated the myth that John Wilson Croker's attack in the *Quarterly Review* (the critic said to have 'killed' Keats) ended Barbauld's poetic career. Clery begins her study by categorically refuting this reading, suggesting that not only did Barbauld continue to publish, but that her poem was intended as a provocation against Parliament's economic policies of trade blockades that precipitated economic crisis (6). Clery calls Croker one of the poem's best readers as his attack indicates his recognition of its power as a catalyst for political change including negotiated peace and parliamentary reform (228). Clery's conviction that Barbauld's poem is a 'deliberate act of courage' (226) corrects the idea that she is a native idealist discouraged by criticism and creates the thesis for the monograph.

The book is divided into two sections with an appendix containing the poem. The main section, 'The Making of *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*', offer seven chapters, carefully parsing contexts of the years 1811 and 1812 and how they are reflected in the poem. The chapters are given allusive and punning chapter titles and follow the chronology of the poem with impressive scholarship: 'Economic Warfare', 'Writing for the Enemy', 'Commercial Dissent', 'Stoic Patriotism', 'The Prophet Motive', 'Ruin: Doing the Policy in Different Voices,' and 'Lady Credit'. Clery begins with a consideration of the economic crisis caused by the disruption of trade within the contexts of contemporary poetic works, which protest war. Barbauld's poetic intervention is connected with Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*. In chapter two Clery pronounces the poem a Juvenelian satire, which changes the nature and import of the poem (38) as addressing the ruling class. An innovative linkage to the writings of William Roscoe in the third chapter brings the poem into a public sphere of Dissenting public intellectuals whose forms of commerce takes a Stoical cast of enlightening and liberating the mind (64). Stoicism also informs her sense of patriotism, the subject of the fourth chapter, which makes allegiance to community rather than nation state and can be traced in her earlier poems and prose tracts as well as those of her brother John Aikin. Loss within her Stoic perspective is a catalyst for heroic action (76) and enables her to 'keep faith with her political principles' (85). Clery's punning phrase 'Prophet Motive' considers the poem's vision of Britain laid to waste, reading her lines as a response to Coleridge's *Poems* (1796). Barbauld's ambivalence about ruins traced in Chapter 6 uncovers a 'dialogic interdependence' (130); Clery situates *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* within complex contemporary discussions. The result is something she terms 'sportive' and 'carnavalesque', anticipating T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (137). The final chapter in the section considers the identity of the spirit in the poem, which Clery identifies as Public Credit.

Part II, 'What Happened Next', is briefer. 'Publication to Vindication' offers a chronology from January to June 1812 as the poem appears in octavo format on 12 February during a year of crisis. Its appearance was preceded by an attack on Barbauld by Coleridge in a public lecture on Milton and quickly followed by the Luddite Rising and the Frame Breaking Bill about which Byron (who was about to become famous through the publication of *Childe Harold* on 10 March) memorably made his maiden speech in the House of Lords and culminating in the *Anti-Jacobin's* review of Barbauld's poem in June. The final chapter considers the summer of 1812 beginning with the withdrawal of French blockades and evidence

of the poem's influence as well as its appearance in the United States.

Clery writes with conviction and verve; this is a work whose tone is *con brio* tracing the contexts of politics and economy in the years surrounding the writing of the poem, but its aims are more wide-ranging than this ambitious re-evaluation of one work might suggest. Clery makes a case for rereading women Romantic poets' work as something other than 'narratives of defeat and disappointment, compromise and constraint' as well as recognizing that they wrote in 'collaboration and dialogue' with men (230). In the concluding paragraphs Clery explains that the poem is recognizable in an era of neoliberalism in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis and following the model of Naomi Klein suggest that in 1812 'a more progressive and democratic variety of liberalism prevailed' (232). E. J. Clery's excellent book is highly recommended.

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[Editorial Note: The final paragraph of this review was amended on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018 with the reviewer's agreement to clarify E. J. Clery's critical position.]