

conceptualize and critique post-Union Anglo-Irish relations and to make women's "sociability visible as a mode of knowledge" (208). Similarly, Jane Austen captured the affective experience of the fleeting everyday in *Persuasion* (1815) through attention to advertisements, newsmen, and fugitive print, positioning the novel within—and, in its material durability, apart from—the sphere of printed ephemera and ephemerality.

The Ephemeral Eighteenth Century represents an ambitious undertaking on Russell's part: printed ephemera encompasses so many different kinds of fugitive texts and images that exceeded regulatory systems enacted by eighteenth-century collectors and threaten to overwhelm systematized analysis by modern media historians. Cheap print was essential to social and cultural life and yet disposable, ubiquitous and yet tending toward obsolescence and loss. Russell's labor involved in finding and organizing this material, distributed across various archives and institutions, is impressive. The larger economy of print beyond the codex-form book, Russell demonstrates, significantly influenced and was remediated by later eighteenth-century fiction and poetry, and she suggests how tools of literary interpretation can help scholars analyze ephemeral texts and the accidental readings they enabled. But how did books also influence genres of ephemera and the literacies such media encouraged? Did fugitive commercial appropriations of novels, such as cheap adaptations or small printed images, engraved consumer objects, and wax figures depicting popular characters—Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* comes to mind here—give rise to new types of ephemera or, through their cultural ubiquity, reshape conceptions of society, sociability, and the present? Ephemera possessed both a poetics and a complex politics, and Russell shows how the material texts undergirding polite sociability were used to exclude the masses and shore up aristocratic hierarchies, how radicals deployed and collected ephemeral print, and how discourses of ephemerality were used to define literary and cultural value. Her book opens up new avenues for research on the political ideologies and cultural literacies made possible via the full spectrum of print as it penetrated daily life, complementing, for instance, recent work on the importance of newspaper advertisements and commercial trade cards to sustaining and making legible imperial expansion, slavery, and racial ideologies. It is also powerful reminder of the women and men behind some of the most important collections of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century print material held at the British Library and British Museum, proof of ephemerologists' lasting impact on scholarship.

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Ruth Salter intends *Saints, Cure-Seekers, and Miraculous Healing in Twelfth-Century England* to be an "in-depth study of the cure-seeking process," that is, the ways in which people living in twelfth-century England sought healing from the saints (2). The study of saintly healing in medieval England was kicked off in 1977 by the publication of Ronald Finucane's *Miracles and Pilgrims*. In this volume, Salter speaks more about disability studies, saints' communities, and monastic medical knowledge than Finucane did, reflecting trends in the scholarship since Finucane's time, but her underlying methodology is not dissimilar from his. Paging through the book, one finds tables comparing numbers of people who suffered from various ailments,

the distances they traveled, and such data as the balance between men versus women, the laity versus the religious, and adults versus children interspersed with descriptions of specific miracles that Salter finds particularly interesting or significant.

Salter attempts to differentiate her study from others by focusing on a small number of miracle collections, just seven of the dozens of texts she could have considered. These seven were selected, Salter states, because “they do not contain large volumes of cure-seekers . . . [and] were cults primarily focused on localised care,” so “provid[ing] the opportunity to gain a familiarity with the individual cure-seekers and the cults they appealed to” (5). While this sounds promising in theory, Salter’s decision to focus on a small number of localized cults means that it is difficult to answer the kinds of questions she wishes to ask.

Salter is keen to explore medieval medical ideas as a context for her study. She devotes the book’s first chapter to explaining the basics of humoral theory, surveying the medical literature available to monks overseeing her seven selected sites, and considering how monks cared for the ill in their own establishments. There is little connective tissue between this chapter and the remainder of the book. In the second chapter, after looking at the ailments described in her limited source base, she concludes that “hagiographical terminology for affliction tended to be relatively simplistic” (89). There are, however, twelfth-century English collections that contain far more medical terminology and more stories about ill monks than do those she selected. Had these texts been analyzed, the first chapter could have had more payoff.

In chapter 3, Salter categorizes the cure-seekers in her stories according to their gender, age, and religious and social status and then works to correlate these categories with the types of ailments the individuals suffered. Here, as in chapter 2, Salter’s restricted sample makes it difficult for her to draw conclusions. For example, her attempt to compare the ailments of the thirty known high-status individuals with those of the twenty-five known lower-status individuals in her sample turns up little differentiation, and leaves Salter wondering whether the fact that eight of her lower-status cure-seekers suffered from paralysis compared to five of the higher-status was the result of poor diet (97).

A problem with Salter’s selection and treatment of her sources needs to be underlined here. Her first two sources, the anonymous *Miracles of St Swithun* and Eadmer of Canterbury’s *Miracles of St Dunstan*, are largely made up of stories about tenth- and eleventh-century individuals. Nearly three-quarters of the fifty-five stories in the *Miracles of St Swithun* derive from a collection written by Lantfred of Fleury ca. 975, with one more drawn from an eleventh-century text composed by Ælfric of Evesham. Only a quarter of the Swithun stories (fourteen of fifty-five) date to the anonymous author’s time of writing, ca. 1100. All Salter tells the reader is that the anonymous author “built on a number of earlier editions of Swithun’s hagiography” (6). Eadmer of Canterbury’s *Miracles of St Dunstan*, meanwhile, is a rewriting of a late eleventh-century text, Osbern of Canterbury’s *Miracles of St Dunstan*. Osbern was dead before the twelfth century began, as were many of the cure-seekers described in his text. Salter says nothing about this, and the complexities of her other sources, such as the notoriously complicated compilation known as the *Liber Eliensis*, also go unremarked. Salter frequently picks out stories in other collections and jumps forward into thirteenth- or fourteenth-century texts when her own sources do not contain what she wishes to discuss. This casual attitude toward authorship and chronology is distressing, not least because of the missed opportunity to see how cure seeking may have changed over time.

Salter is especially interested in the journeys cure-seekers made to shrines, devoting both the fourth and fifth chapters to this topic. She considers the question of distances from the point of view of the cure-seekers and explores what those journeys were actually like. This is a refreshing change of perspective, one that Salter justifiably underlines as a new scholarly contribution. Unfortunately, though, her decision to focus on localized cults means that her sources provide little information about these journeys. The vast majority of the English cure-seekers in her source base, as her table reveals (125), lived within fifty miles of the shrine, most of them even closer, within twenty miles, such that only a handful of them were travelling

for long or on unknown roads. For those few who did make considerable pilgrimages, Salter laments that “cult centres were less concerned with recording information regarding journeys than might be expected” (130), and seeks information from secondary source material. It is a pity that Salter did not choose one of the Thomas Becket collections to analyze, as they contain more of the kind of information that she was keen to explore.

In the final chapter, Salter addresses cure-seekers’ experiences at their destinations, with much of her discussion focused on the question of lay access to shrines. There is good scrutiny here of how the location of these shrines could move, as in the case of William of Norwich’s cult, and how some saints had more than one cult center, as was the case in Æbbe’s cult. But the question of how or whether monks restricted access to their shrines is the one that most intrigues Salter. Here again, her selected texts do not provide much information, and she needs to reach into other texts and later centuries to make her points. What her cure-seekers did at the shrines, something that her hagiographers described much more fully, is the subject of the last, sadly short, section of the chapter. Salter’s efforts in this book make it clear that there is more for us to understand about how medieval people sought cures from the saints. It is a pity that these efforts were not directed toward the range of texts that would have most forwarded her analysis.

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VALERIE SMITH. *Rational Dissenters in Late Eighteenth-Century England: “An Ardent Desire of Truth.”* Studies in Modern British Religious History 42. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2021. Pp. 368. \$99.00 (cloth).
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Valerie Smith’s *Rational Dissenters in Late Eighteenth-Century England: “An Ardent Desire of Truth”* is an important study. Historians have recognized the role of Rational Dissenters in late eighteenth-century English politics and religion and, though they were small in number, the significance of their contribution to reform. But Rational Dissent has proved difficult to define, both in terms of what Rational Dissent was, and who Rational Dissenters were. Smith’s book is the first detailed study of Rational Dissent and, in particular, its supporters. She focuses principally on England and the period 1770 to 1800, with a final chapter covering developments in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

There are two major parts to the book. First, Smith’s examination of the writings of Rational Dissenters and their opponents. Second, her identification of those who supported Rational Dissent. She points out that previous studies have rarely looked beyond Richard Price and Joseph Priestley; colossi of late eighteenth-century thought, but hardly representative of Rational Dissent generally. Her work is the first attempt to identify those who supported Rational Dissent, its institutions, and who subscribed to its publications. Smith sees the focus on the theology of Rational Dissent as the key to her book. She argues that Rational Dissent has been studied in terms of its politics, but that it was the theology of Rational Dissenters, grounded in scripture, which underpinned their political ideas and their involvement in the various campaigns for reform. After quoting John Disney on the sufficiency of scripture and the importance of private judgment, she examines in chapter 3 a wide range of writings by Rational Dissenters and their opponents to determine the core beliefs that Arians and Socinians (or Unitarians) shared and their differences with orthodox writers as a result of their