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Nandrea, Lorri G. **Misfit forms: paths not taken by the British novel.** Fordham, 2015. 272p bibl index afp ISBN [9780823263431](#) cloth, \$55.00

This complex study is really about “roads less traveled,” as Nandrea (independent scholar) says in the conclusion, not “paths not taken.” How does the history of the novel look if one attends to minor, rather than major, formal practices? Drawing on theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari, the author calls for new attention to literature’s unique formal properties, its “style”—properties that may include the book as material object. The first two chapters engage with the struggles—philosophical, typographical, semantic—over the differences between “sentimentality” (repetition of feelings across groups), “sympathy” (identification with the other), and “sensibility” (physical resonances of outside forces that produce “difference”). “Sympathy” wins, but sensibility’s potential manifests itself in Laurence Sterne’s work and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, which emphasize “the body’s capacity to be open and responsive to what is within and without it.” The third chapter explores “cumulative” as opposed to “teleological” plotting using Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*, with their emphasis on labor and material objects, as examples. And the fourth chapter analyzes the anti-teleological power of “wonder,” which does not drive onward to knowledge, as opposed to “curiosity.” An intriguing but difficult book.

Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students, researchers, faculty.

--M. E. Burstein, *SUNY College at Brockport*

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