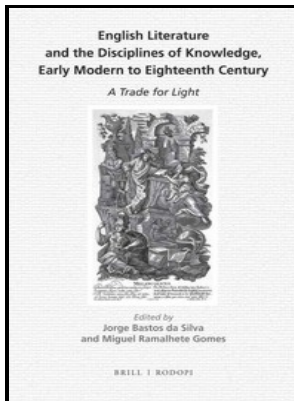


# Nerves, spirits and fibres - towards defining the origins of sensibility

Australian National University Press - What Is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New  
Daniel Wickberg  
What Is the History of Sensibilities?



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## Nerves, Spirits and Fibres: Toward the Origins of Sensibility (1975)

Private journals and letters, once thought to offer unmediated access to the experiences of persons in the past, are now seen as linguistic documents; they contain culturally developed ideologies rather than direct records of experiences.

### Sensibility

You can pre-order your copy now. But *Nervous Acts*, with its introductions and commentaries and epilogues and codas and sometimes-apologetic, sometimes-testy notes, still has an argument to make: three arguments, actually. Although Trilling used the word infrequently, many of his essays are concerned specifically with liberalism, not as a formal political ideology, but as a sensibility revealed through the moral, epistemological, and ontological dispositions of literature and criticism.

### Richard's The Physiology of Sensibility in Clarissa on JSTOR

Skeptics will say that sensibilities can be found only in representations, that it is only in discourse or texts of various kinds that sensibilities achieve any definition—and they are right. At the same time, theorists asserted that individuals who had ultra-sensitive nerves would have keener senses, and thus be more aware of beauty and moral truth.

### Nervous Acts

For a work that uses Williams's concept, see Glenn Hendler, *Public Sentiments: Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* Chapel Hill, N. Historians of technology have shown the ways in which changes in technologies have had consequences for the forms in which sound and vision are experienced.

### Sensibility : definition of Sensibility and synonyms of Sensibility (English)

The brain and nerves have usually been treated as narrow topics within the history of science and medicine. This concept emerged in eighteenth-century Britain, and was closely associated with studies of as the means through which knowledge is gathered. Rare are those historical studies—like Huizinga on the late Middle Ages, Febvre on 16th century France—which do tell us something about the sensibility of the period.

**Sensibility : definition of Sensibility and synonyms of Sensibility (English)**

Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* Cambridge, Mass. In sidestepping questions of the social determination of cultural forms, such an approach necessarily avoids questions of power and agency.

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