

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910784519803321
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Titolo	The spirit of despotism [[electronic resource]] : invasions of privacy in the 1790s // John Barrell
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oxford ; ; New York, : Oxford University Press, 2006
ISBN	1-383-04266-7 1-280-75825-2 0-19-151568-X 1-4294-2214-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (295 p.)
Disciplina	941.073
Soggetti	Political corruption - Great Britain - History - 18th century Great Britain Social life and customs 18th century Great Britain Politics and government 1789-1820 Social aspects Great Britain History 1789-1820
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [247]-265) and index.
Nota di contenuto	List of Illustrations; List of Table; List of Abbreviations; Introduction; 1. Charing Cross and the City; 2. Coffee-House Politicians; 3. Weymouth Amusements; 4. Hair Powder; 5. Cottage Politics; Bibliography; Contents; Index
Sommario/riassunto	How was the social and cultural life of Britain affected by the fear that the French Revolution would spread across the channel? In his brilliant new book, John Barrell argues that the fear of revolution produced a culture of surveillance and suspicion which penetrated every aspect of private life. The Spirit of Despotism shows how the culture of suspicion affected how people spoke and behaved in London coffee-houses; how it influenced attitudes to the king's behaviour on holiday; how it infiltrated the country cottage, previously idealised as haven of peace and retirement; and how it influences