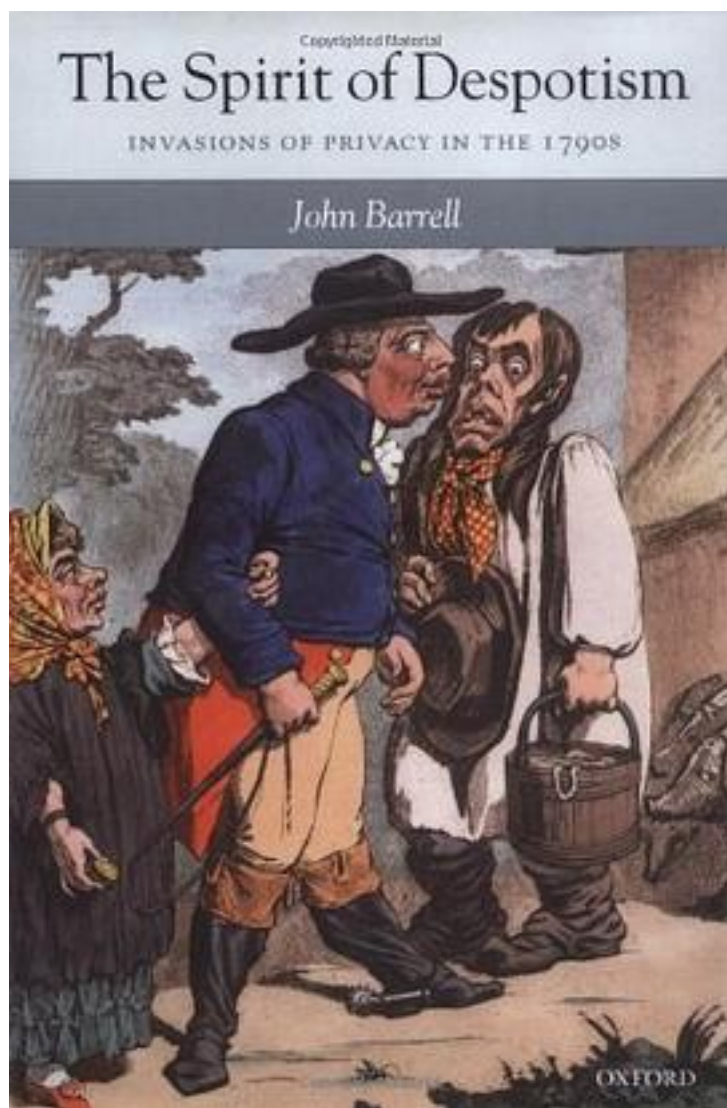


The Spirit of Despotism



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How was the social and cultural life of Britain affected by the fear that the French Revolution would spread across the channel? In this brilliant, engagingly written, and profusely illustrated book, John Barrell, well-known for his studies of the history, literature, and art of the period, argues that the conflict between the ancien regime in Britain and the emerging democratic movement was so fundamental that it could not be contained within what had previously been thought of as the 'normal' arena of politics. Activities and spaces which had previously been regarded as 'outside' politics suddenly no longer seemed to be so, and the fear of revolution produced a culture of surveillance and suspicion which penetrated every aspect of private life. Drawing on an unusually wide range of sources, including novels, poems, plays, newspapers, debates in parliament, trials, political pamphlets, and caricatures, *The Spirit of Despotism* focuses on a number of examples of such invasions of privacy. It 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 in private, especially during his summer holidays in Weymouth; how it infiltrated the country cottage, previously idealized as a protected haven of peace and retirement from political life; and how it influenced the fashion of the period, so that even the way people chose to style their hair came to be seen as a political issue.

作者介绍:

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