The creation of a working class in the early industrial era involved a breaking of the sensibility of an agricultural population, the reworking of the psyche of a people whose lives were articulated to the rhythms of the seasons, and the refashioning of that sensibility in the interests of organised manufacture. This inflicted great violence on the people, who were uprooted and disoriented by processes never known before.

The old working class sensibility – created with such severity and violence – was destined to be broken once more, and recreated in the image of the merchandising of commodities. That this appeared a less brutal breaking and reconstruction of the psyche is an illusion … its consequences may be read in the indices of unhappiness in the Western heartlands in the second half of the 20th century – crime statistics, addictions, the breakdown of relationships, the dissolution of family, fear of strangers, xenophobia, racism, assaults upon women and children, mental and emotional stress, streets deserted to the predations of robbers, muggers, vandals and molesters. These are not manifestations of "human nature", in the narrow, reductive version of this now invoked by capitalist ideology; they are the results of destructive and coercive social change.
[the elimination of distance]

This process has been accompanied by a "freedom of choice", the more resonant because it means the freedom to reconstitute a cultural identity which has been removed from us … what they want and who they choose must be mediated through the markets … the shopping malls have been haunted by a poignant spectacle … the needs [of children] have to be bought in, and which the parents in their love will strive desperately to provide, are also a form of estrangement, a kind of abduction of the spirit, of the hear. Alien values are implanted into the lives of the people, precisely through the children

This colonialism, like any other, involves an abridgement of freedoms, an undermining of autonomy; but since these things do not acknowledge themselves, all the protests at it come out in deviant, symbolic and involuted ways

Fewer and fewer basic necessities are provided locally. Almost nothing is any longer produced, created, or made where it is needed; but must be brought in; and because these have become the constituents of young identities, the children see their formation as coming from elsewhere: NO wonder they say there is nothing to do in the places where they live; they say they are bored, uninterested; teenagers cannot wait to get away, to grow up, to leave home, to get away, to escape; above all "to find themselves"; selves dispersed and untraceable in the markets that have become the dominant agent of their dispossession.

To autocolonise means to impose upon one's own country an economic model imported from elsewhere, a model that is not in the interests of a majority of the people. The enormous advantage to the West of autocolonisation is obvious, because it can dissociate itself from the cruelties this involves and especially from the inevitable violence that must follow … economic forces are an invisible army of occupation, forcibly evicting whole communities from settled ways of life, from their sole means of survival. When the people resist, the sophisticated weaponry of the modern State will be deployed against them. An obliging and craven media will call the people terrorists, unsocial elements, Naxalites, Communists, and will applaud the repression that follows … Human rights are, in fact, the first causality of this economic war, a war not made by the poor, but one for which they are universally blamed and criminalised. The abuse of human rights is built into the supremacy of the rights of the market… [but] there are those resisting the next phase of colonial penetration

"the manufacturing jobs that used to provide opportunities for young people in inner city neighbourhoods and strongly, although indirectly, supported values of decency and conventionality have largely vanished form the economy, replaced by thousands of low paying service jobs often located in the suburbs, beyond the reach of poor neighbourhoods. These changes have damaged financial health of the inner city and undermined the quality of available role models. The trust and perceptions of decency that once prevailed in the community are increasingly absent. In their place, street values represented by the fast life, violence, and crime, become more prominent." (145)