

Dear Mr Monbiot

Last night I heard you speak at length for the first time. I have successfully avoided you till now, and thought I was safe in the early hours with the World Service. But there you were . Sneaky.

You speak very well, and it is clear where you wish all of this to end. We will get all of our nutrition from a tablet, produced entirely by machine, swallowed whenever prescribed necessary. Just like Star Trek. This throws up some important issues:

Work.

The school dinner lady. The waiter. The baker. The rice grower. The tea picker. The goat herd. The chocolatier. The fisherman.

What will they all *do* ? Watch telly ? Shop ? Fight ?

*Laborare est orare.*

Margaret Thatcher showed us what happens when you rob a community of its right to work. Loss of purpose, cohesion and dignity. Replaced by drugs and Jeremy Kyle.

What Mrs T demonstrated in the pit village, you are advocating on a planetary scale.

Health.

The human body is designed to run on food. Farmers know better than anyone what happens when you are told by the experts that it is OK to meddle with a species diet.

You are advocating fundamental changes to the human diet in a shorter time frame than it takes for a cancer drug to be approved. Can you reassure us that this will all be safe ?

Control.

So long as the primary means of production – land – is owned and controlled by millions of individuals around the planet, we can be confident of some degree of democracy in our food supply chain. These machines of yours: Who will own them, or more importantly the patents that will inevitably be attached ? The state ? The Chinese ? The Mafia ? Spectre ?

The environment.

In each successive decade, since the Industrial Revolution, the percentage of household income spent on food has fallen. And what do we spend this spare money on ? Tat.

Plastic tat. Which, if you could bring yourself to train your sights on something other than farming, is the real environmental issue. Will your nutrition tablets lower the cost of feeding ourselves still further ? What will be the environmental implications of this ?

Looking forward to your response.

(and copied to you via The Grauniad).