4.11: Resistance to Popular Culture

Although popular culture has been expanding rapidly at the expense of folk culture, it is not without resistance. Although it is not strictly-speaking true, global culture is perceived as largely corporate, secular, and western. Each of these aspects have their own critics.

Anti-globalists fall into two main groups. The first are leftists who oppose the power that has accumulated to corporations and the authoritarian state. The other group are rightists who prefer that power be centered at the state level, and who fear that globalization naturally undermines state sovereignty.

In some places, globalization is the same thing as modernization is the same thing as westernization which is perceived as secular (or even atheistic), materialistic and corrupt. Movements such as Al-Qaeda or Islamic State are violently opposed to popular culture, although they would not have a problem if their idea of the ideal culture were to become fully global. Rejecting modern popular culture often also involves elevating a nostalgic, often imaginary golden age as the only acceptable model of society.

Many people feel that symbols and representations of popular culture are erasing the very personality of regional cultures. Resistance to popular culture can come in many forms. Let us revisit the concept of fundamental needs, which are universal, and how they vary geographically. Locally sourced food products, customs, and recipes are pitted against global fast-food giants that provide inexpensive and easy access to ready-made food products. There has been an uprising of farm-to-table businesses, the Slow Food movement, and an emphasis on fair-trade products.