

Folk as ideology

In “Folkmusik - en brygd”, Jan Ling (1979) describes his approach to folk music as more music-historical than music-analytical. His aim is to paint with a broad brush. The author examines the ideologies of folk music with focus on the period 1920–1950 and discusses which ideological currents that occur in his contemporary folk music environment.

The very word “folk music” [is] an ideological concept: it is coined by representatives of the 17th-18th century intellectual bourgeoisie as a designation of ‘the others’, the folk music, which they observe, study and try to incorporate into their culture or bring back to the people to counteract the influence of mass culture. [...] Eventually - during a long process [...] - practitioners, musicians, singers and dancers reclaimed the term and make it their own. [...] It usually means that a series of values follow the ideological concept. The object itself, the phenomenon, has been colored by the takeover process.

(Ling 1979, 10 *my translation*)

Ling points at a number of ideologies and describes how they “[...] occur in different forms, from a spontaneous, often sound and real protest and a legitimate search for alternatives, to deliberate political manipulations in the murkiest waters” (Ling 1979, 33 *my translation*).

Ling, Jan. 1979. ”Folkmusik – en brygd.” In *Fataburen*, 9–34. Stockholm: Nordiska Museet.