# Dance and the Hollywood Musical

Transcription of podcast 2

**Bricolage v engineering**

Welcome back!

The first way in which Feuer suggests that the Hollywood film musical creates an illusion of folk art is that it prioritises ‘bricolage’ over ‘engineering’. So what exactly does she mean by ‘bricolage’?

‘Bricolage' is an idea developed by the structuralist thinker, Claude Levi-Strauss. The term ‘bricolage’ means 'tinkering' – it conveys the idea of making use of anything at hand– a kind of makeshift approach, making use of what's there.

In the context of the Hollywood film musicals, performers make use of nearby props and anything at hand to create song and dance routines in their immediate environment. Therefore dances can develop out of the contents of a room, the environment of the street, and the props in a bar.

The effect that these 'prop numbers' have is to create a sense of spontaneity –as if the performers are making use of their environments and props on the spur of the moment. Although these numbers are highly engineered (which is a characteristic of mass production), they are given a sense of spontaneous bricolage (a characteristic of folk culture).

I now want to look at the next film clip from *Singin’ in the Rain.*

As you are watching, think about how bricolage is at work in this number and how it masks the engineered effects and the design of the number.

To what extent are you convinced about the spontaneity of this sequence?

Pause here and watch the clip.